



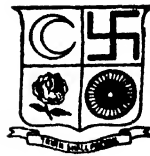




# THE HISTORY OF BENGAL

VOLUME I  
HINDU PERIOD

EDITED BY  
R. C. MAJUMDAR,  
M.A., PH.D., F.R.A.S.B.



PUBLISHED BY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF DACCA  
RAMNA, DACCA



*First edition : May 1943.*

P R I N T E D BY SUREN C. DAS, M.A.  
ON BEHALF OF GENERAL PRINTERS &  
PUBLISHERS LTD. AT THEIR WORKS—  
ABINAS PRESS—110, DHARAMTALA ST., CALCUTTA

## FOREWORD

By

### THE HISTORY OF BENGAL PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

THE idea of writing a comprehensive History of Bengal on modern scientific lines may be traced back to 1912 when Lord Carmichael, the first Governor of the Bengal Presidency, took the initiative and invited MM. Haraprasad Śāstrī to prepare a scheme. It was proposed to publish the history in three volumes dealing respectively with the Hindu, Muslim and British periods. Several meetings were held in the Government House, Calcutta, but what became of this plan and how far it was matured are not definitely known. Some years later, the late Raja Prafulla Nath Tagore, the grandson of the famous Kali Krishna Tagore, volunteered to pay the entire cost of such a publication, and invited the late Mr. Rakhaldas Banerji to draw up a plan along with some other well-known scholars of his time. Several meetings were held in the house of the Raja, but ultimately nothing came out of it.

Ever since the foundation of the University of Dacca, it was felt that the University should take up the task of preparing a History of Bengal as early as practicable. This idea received an impetus from Sir Jadunath Sarkar, who, in the course of a lecture delivered at the University about the middle of July 1933, emphasised that a History of Bengal on modern scientific lines was long overdue, and that this University, standing as it does in the very heart of an ancient and important seat of Bengal culture, should in the fitness of things take up the work. Sir Jadunath promised his whole-hearted support and active co-operation in this enterprise.

The scheme received a new impetus from Mr. (now Sir) A. F. Rahman, when he joined the University as Vice-Chancellor in July 1934. In his first convocation address next month he emphasised the need of commencing the work, and in his second convocation speech, in July 1935, he announced that some preliminary work had already been done.

By the end of August 1935, the scheme took a more definite shape, as Professor R. C. Majumdar, Head of the Department of History, who had so long been pre-occupied with his own research work on the history of Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East, was now free to take up the work.

On the 13th of September 1935, the Vice-Chancellor convened a general meeting at his house, of local citizens and University teachers interested in the subject, and a Committee called the History of Bengal Publication Committee was formed at the meeting composed of the following gentlemen :—

1. A. F. Rahman, Esq., Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University  
—Chairman
2. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali—Secretary
3. Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya—Jt. Secretary
4. Professor R. C. Majumdar
5. Sir Jadunath Sarkar
6. Dr. K. R. Quanungo
7. Hakim Habibur Rahman
8. Mr. Sharafuddin

The Committee formally met immediately after the general meeting, and its first task was the framing of a tentative Scheme of Work for the consideration of the Executive Council of the University. Mr. (now Sir) A. F. Rahman very generously announced at the inaugural meeting of the Committee a donation of Rupees one thousand in memory of his deceased mother, and Dr. K. R. Quanungo, Reader in History, promised on behalf of the Friends' Library, Kanungopara, Chittagong, a contribution of Rupees fifty.

The Committee passed several resolutions, one requesting the Executive Council to undertake to find funds for the publication of the proposed History, and to make an initial grant of Rs. 1,000/- and another requesting Professor Majumdar to take the necessary steps for the furtherance of the scheme.

In pursuance of the latter resolution of the Committee, Professor Majumdar wrote to the Vice-Chancellor on the 14th September, 1935, requesting him to place the draft scheme before the Executive Council and to move the Council to provide the necessary funds for the publication of the proposed History, and to make an initial grant of Rupees one thousand for meeting the preliminary expenses.

The scheme was recommended by the Academic Council and in a meeting held on 19th December, 1935, the Executive Council finally approved of the entire scheme, financial as well as administrative, and resolved as follows :—

“That the financial and administrative schemes for the publication of the History of Bengal as a Dacca University publication as per Appendix c be approved, that for the purpose of meeting preliminary expenses for the publication of the History, a grant of Rs. 1,000/-

## Foreword

VH

be now made out of the University funds and that the University undertakes to find funds that might be necessary, in addition to the donation raised, for the publication of the History on the definite understanding that the proprietary right of the History should solely vest in the University of Dacca."

It is not necessary to reproduce the entire scheme, but the following extracts may be quoted to give an idea of the administrative arrangement :

### "SCHEME FOR A HISTORY OF BENGAL

1. It shall be published by and at the expense of the University of Dacca under its general superintendence and control.
2. The History shall be divided into three volumes as follows :—
  - Vol. I. The Hindu Period.
  - Vol. II. Pre-Mughal Period (1200-1576 A.D.).
  - Vol. III. Mughal Period (1576-1757 A.D.).
3. Dr. R. C. Majumdar shall be the editor of the first volume and Sir Jadunath Sarkar should be requested to edit the second and the third volumes.
4. The management of the preparation and publication of the proposed History shall be entrusted to a committee to be called, 'History of Bengal Publication Committee' composed as follows :—
  1. The Vice-Chancellor—Chairman.
  2. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali—Secretary.
  3. Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya—Jt. Secretary.
- Other members—4. Sir Jadunath Sarkar and 5. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Editors ; 6. Dr. K. R. Quanungo ; 7. Hakim Habibur Rahman ; 8. Mr. Sharafuddin. The Committee shall have power to co-opt other members."

In the second meeting of the History Publication Committee held on 16th February, 1936, a fund called the History of Bengal Publication Fund was created with the nucleus grant of Rs. 1,000/- made by the Executive Council, and appeals for financial help were also made. In response to these appeals, Sir P. C. Ray made a donation of Rs. 1,000/- and the Government of Bengal offered a similar donation of Rs. 1,000/- to the Fund. Subsequently, the Executive Council sanctioned a sum of Rs. 10,000/- for the printing and publication of the work.

In course of the long period of composition and completion of the work, several noteworthy changes took place in the personnel of

the Committee as well as in the scheme of the work. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali resigned the office of Secretary on 25. 5. 36, and Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya was appointed in his place. Dr. A. F. Rahman resigned the office of Chairman on 8. 4. 37, and Dr. R. C. Majumdar was appointed in his place. Professor R. C. Majumdar resigned the office on 29. 6. 42 and Professor M. Hasan succeeded him. Mr. Sharafuddin ceased to be a member of the Committee, and Professor S. K. De, Dr. M. Shahidullah, Dr. M. I. Borah, and Dr. D. C. Ganguly were added as members to the Committee. Dr. D. C. Ganguly was appointed Joint Secretary on 19. 9. 40.

Some changes in the scheme of work, particularly in the distribution of chapters to different scholars, were also made from time to time. The names of the writers finally selected are mentioned in the Table of Contents under each chapter. The Committee convey their thanks to all of them for their valuable co-operation.

Though the work was initiated early in 1936, its progress was delayed for several reasons, to which reference has been made by the editor in the Preface. It is a matter of great satisfaction to all concerned that in spite of all difficulties and handicaps the first part of the work is at last completed and published.

The Committee take this opportunity of expressing their gratitude to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, C.I.E., for commending the work to the University and for accepting the onerous duties of editorship of Volumes II and III of the history. They desire to offer their grateful thanks to Sir A. F. Rahman, for his services in regard to the initiation and promotion of the work during the period of his Vice-Chancellorship. The Committee feel especially indebted to Professor R. C. Majumdar, who, in spite of his heavy administrative duties as Vice-Chancellor, accepted the editorship of Volume I, contributed to it so many chapters, and saw the book through the Press. His energy and enterprise alone have made the early publication of the work possible.

The Committee take this opportunity to convey their thanks to Sir P. C. Ray for his very generous donation for the publication of this work.

The thanks of the Committee are also due to various persons and institutions for the help rendered by them in the publication of this work. Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, M.A., F.R.A.S.B., Director General of Archaeology in India has most generously lent free of charge the blocks preserved in his Department and also supplied prints of negatives at the usual cost. With his kind permission, the Superintendent, Archaeological Section, the Indian Museum and the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle, Calcutta, have

rendered all facilities for the study of the sculptures and taking photos wherever necessary. We take this opportunity to offer the Director General and the members of his Department our most grateful thanks for the very valuable services rendered by them. The authorities of the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, Vangīya Sāhitya Parishat, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Indian Society of Oriental Art, Dacca Museum, Greater India Society and Indian Science News Association, and Messrs. O. C. Gangoly, N. K. Bhattasali, J. N. Banerjea and S. K. Saraswati have lent us free of charge blocks and photos in their possession and we offer our heartfelt thanks for the readiness with which they have offered their co-operation.

We wish we could say the same thing about the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi, the only institution in the whole of India from which we have failed to receive the help and sympathy we had every reason to expect, in view of the past history of the institution and its illustrious founder who has rendered yeoman's service to the advancement of the study of the History of Bengal. This Society alone possesses all the illustrated Buddhist manuscripts, definitely known to be written in Ancient Bengal, whose whereabouts are known at present. It is hardly necessary to point out that the coloured illustrations in these mss. are necessary for a proper study of the art of painting in Ancient Bengal. In spite of repeated requests, the Society refused to lend them to us and only gave permission to consult them at Rajshahi. The Vice-Chancellor (who was also the Editor) personally saw the President of the Society and explained that it was impossible to prepare tri-colour blocks at Rajshahi and offered the guarantee of either the Dacca University, or the University of Calcutta (which he hoped to secure from its Vice-Chancellor) for the safe-keeping and return of the mss. if they were sent for a few days to Calcutta. This the Society persistently refused to do with the result that the History of Bengal, containing the first comprehensive treatment of the art of painting, had to be published without those illustrations which have not yet seen the light of the day although the Society has been in possession of the mss. for a quarter of a century. As regards photos of sculptures, the Society offered the use of eleven, already in their possession, only on payment of Rs. 50/- which amounted to the entire cost of their original preparation for the use of the Society. Without pursuing this unpleasant topic any further, it may be said that after prolonged correspondence two photos were lent free on condition that the "Dacca University would give to the Museum free of charge, in return, the blocks of these photographs prepared by them" and "acknowledge duly in the proposed work the courtesy

thus extended." While we take this opportunity to acknowledge the courtesy that we have received from the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, and thank them for their help, we cannot but regret that it was not forthcoming in a larger measure.

As it has not been possible to indicate under each illustration the source from which its photograph was obtained, a separate 'acknowledgement' list has been inserted for this purpose. It is to be definitely understood that the right of reproducing the illustrations is reserved by the persons, authorities and institutions who lent their blocks or photographs.

Finally, we wish to place on record our appreciation of the services rendered by the General Printers and Publishers Ltd., the printers of this volume. The Managing Director of this company Mr. S. C. Das, M.A., an ex-student of the Dacca University, has taken special care to see this volume through the Press and has spared no pains to expedite the publication in the face of exceptional difficulties. Our special thanks are due to him and to Mr. R. K. Ghoshal, M.A. who has not only revised the proofs and prepared the Index, but also made many valuable suggestions for improvement.

## PREFACE

THE genesis of the present work has been explained in the Foreword. The editor feels that he owes an explanation for the very long interval between the inception of the work and its publication. In view of the importance of the subject a few relevant facts may be mentioned which will also incidentally explain the changes made in the personnel of the writers referred to in the Foreword.

Shortly after the work was taken up we were denied the co-operation of Dr. N. K. Bhattasali, M.A., PH.D., who was the Secretary of the Publication Committee and had agreed to write the chapter on Art. It is unnecessary to discuss here the reasons which led Dr. Bhattasali to come to this decision, but the change of Secretary and the loss of a valuable contributor naturally caused dislocation of work and involved considerable delay in completing the preliminary steps. The chapter on Art was entrusted to the late Mr. N. G. Majumdar, who naturally desired to collect photos of select specimens of architecture and sculpture before commencing to write. This took up a long time as the specimens to be photographed were spread over a wide area. At last the photos were prepared and he took them with him in his ill-fated journey to the Indus Valley, as he hoped to be able to write the chapter in his leisure hours while on tour. The tragic circumstances under which he met his end in Sind are known to all. His death dealt a severe blow to our scheme, as most of the photos together with the notes prepared by him were irretrievably lost. In this predicament the editor invited two young scholars—Dr. Niharranjan Ray and Mr. Sarasi Kumar Saraswati—to write the chapter on Art, and they readily agreed to take up the work. But the preparation of a new set of photographs took up much time and caused considerable delay. We take this opportunity to pay our tribute of respect to the gifted archaeologist who had readily volunteered his valuable co-operation which, alas, was denied us by his sudden and tragic death.

When the chapter on Art was assigned to the late Mr. N. G. Majumdar he had to be relieved of the work already allotted to him and this involved re-allocation of a number of chapters. The new arrangement did not prove at all satisfactory, and most of these chapters had to be written by the editor himself. The sudden departure of one of the contributors for Europe, without any previous intimation, also involved more work for the editor, as no



*competent scholar was found willing to take up the work at a short notice.*

Even when most of the chapters were ready the editor was confronted with other difficulties. It was originally proposed to devote a whole chapter to the ethnology of Bengal, and a specialist on the subject was invited to write it. Repeated reminders, extending over a period of five or six years, were always followed by promises to send the contribution within a short period, but it was not received even when the printing of the volume had made considerable progress. As he never declined the task no substitute could be appointed. At last, in order to avoid the total suspension of the work at a time when in view of the abnormal circumstances every effort had to be made to expedite the printing, the editor had no other option but to write himself a brief note on the subject at the beginning of chapter xv. This chapter dealing with the social conditions of Ancient Bengal was also entrusted to a specialist on the subject. After a great deal of delay the promised contribution was received, but it dealt with pre-historic anthropology only and did not at all touch the real subject. Again, in order to avoid further delay in the publication, the editor undertook to write it himself with the co-operation of Dr. D. C. Ganguly, M.A., PH.D. and Dr. R. C. Hazra, M.A., PH.D. The former worked on the epigraphic and the latter on the literary data, and the materials collected by them were co-ordinated and put into proper form by the editor with certain additions. Special thanks are due to both these scholars for having agreed to undertake the work at such short notice.

Thus more than five years had passed before the volume could be sent to the Press. But three months after the printing had begun the declaration of war by Japan upset the normal life in Calcutta and considerably dislocated her business and industry. The printing press was seriously affected by the panicky evacuation of the city, and there was considerable delay before satisfactory progress in the work of printing could be resumed. In view of the abnormal situation no efforts were spared to expedite the printing, lest any fresh wave of panic should again suspend the work. Unfortunately, the Japanese air-raids on Calcutta in December last year again dislocated the business life of Calcutta when only the last four chapters remained to be printed. It reflects great credit upon the custodian of the printing establishment that in spite of considerable difficulties, these chapters were at last printed off. Faced with the contingency of having to postpone indefinitely the publication of the volume over which he had worked for more than six years, the editor decided to push up the printing at any cost, even at the risk of sacrificing quality to a certain extent. The proofs

could not be sent for final revision to the authors of the last three chapters and the editor had to undertake the sole responsibility of seeing them through the Press.

This somewhat long and tedious narrative is given here not only as an explanation of the long delay in the publication of the work, but also as an interesting record which might be of use to the future historian of the History of Bengal. For in view of the present state of our knowledge any exposition of the history of Ancient Bengal must be regarded as provisional; and as new evidence is continually and rapidly accumulating, it may be confidently hoped that the present work would turn out to be merely a precursor of many similar volumes which would be written at no distant date. The editor does not pretend to do anything more than laying the foundation on which more competent hands will build in future, till a suitable structure is raised which would be worthy of our motherland. The historian of that not very distant future may perhaps view with greater sympathy the pioneer efforts of his predecessor if he realises the difficulties under which the latter had to carry on his work, in addition to heavy administrative duties throughout the period.

The task of compiling a history of Ancient Bengal is by no means an easy one. The greater part of the subject is yet an untrodden field, and few have made any special study of such branches of it as art and religion, social and economic conditions, law, and administration. These topics have been so far studied almost exclusively with reference to ancient India as a whole, but a regional study, strictly confined within the limits of the territory where the Bengali language is spoken, has not yet been seriously taken up by competent scholars. In respect of political history also, while much spade work has been done, no serious attempt has yet been made to reconstruct a continuous historical narrative as distinct from the collection and interpretation of a number of archaeological data. In many respects, therefore, the present volume breaks altogether new ground, and faults of both omission and commission are almost inevitable in such a case.

In writing this history we have strictly confined ourselves to the data definitely applicable to the geographical limits of Bengal, and any deviation from this rule has been duly noted.

An attempt has also been made to make the treatment as detached and scientific as possible. Where materials of study are lacking, we have chosen to leave a void rather than fill it up with the help of imaginary or unreliable matter. Many topics of interest and importance have, therefore, been altogether ignored or very imperfectly treated.

It is hardly necessary to recapitulate the difficulties which are inherent in a work of this kind or to explain the principles adopted in the preparation of this volume. The series of historical works published by the Cambridge University have been deliberately adopted as the standard and model of this work, and the following passage in the Preface to the First Volume of the *Cambridge Ancient History* admirably sums up our views and ideals :

"In a co-operative work of this kind, no editorial pains could avoid a certain measure of overlapping; and in fields where there is so much uncertainty and such wide room for divergencies of views, as in the first two volumes, overlapping must mean that occasionally different writers will express or imply different opinions. It has not been thought desirable to attempt to eliminate these differences, though they are often indicated or discussed. Such inconsistencies may sometimes be a little inconvenient for the reader's peace of mind, but it is better he should learn to take them as characteristic of the ground over which he is being guided than that he should be misled by a dogmatic consistency into accepting one view as authoritative and final.

"It will easily be understood that it is not possible to give chapter and verse for every statement or detailed arguments for every opinion, but it is hoped that the work will be found serviceable to professional students as well as to the general reader. The general reader is constantly kept in view throughout, and our aim is to steer a middle course between the opposite dangers, a work which only the expert could read or understand and one so 'popular' that serious students would rightly regard it with indifference."

It is a source of great pleasure to us that in spite of delays and difficulties, it has been found possible to bring out the first volume. The printing of the second volume has already made some progress, though in view of the abnormal situation prevailing in Calcutta, it is difficult to say when it will see the light of day.

On behalf of the Dacca University, and the Editorial Board, we wish to express our indebtedness to the various contributors for their whole-hearted co-operation in this project, even at a considerable personal inconvenience.

The editor acknowledges with pleasure the help he has received from his many friends and old pupils. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D., Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, not only offered many valuable suggestions, but helped the editor to tide over many difficulties that confronted him from time to time. Mr. Sarasi Kumar Saraswati, M.A., Lecturer, Calcutta University, has regularly assisted the editor in seeing the volume through the Press and taken immense pains in preparing photos, blocks and maps, and properly arranging these materials for publication. Mr. Pramode Lal Paul, M.A., Mr. A. Halim, M.A., and Mr. Kshitish Chandra Ray, M.A. prepared a bibliography of articles, published in oriental journals, for the use of the contributors. Mr. Subodh Chandra Banerji, M.A., Keeper of Manuscripts, Dacca

University Library, offered many valuable suggestions in writing the chapter on Social Conditions. Mr. Anil Chandra Mukherji has drawn the maps which are published in this volume. The editor conveys his thanks and expresses his indebtedness to these and all others who have helped him in any way in discharging his responsible duties.

The system of transliteration followed in the *Epigraphia Indica* has been adopted in this volume. In chapter xii *i* and *ü* have been used to indicate the vowels *i* and *u*, not joined with any consonant. As regards Indian place-names, the system of spelling adopted in the *Imperial Gazetteer* has been generally followed, though there are some deviations in well-known cases. In writing modern place-names vowels have not been as a rule accented except in cases of find-spots of images and inscriptions. In these and similar instances, such as English derivatives from Sanskrit words (like Tantric, Puranic, Brahmanical *etc.*) it has not been possible to maintain a rigid uniformity, for in view of the fact that different practices are adopted even in standard works, and none of them can be regarded as definitely established, it has not been thought desirable or necessary to take meticulous care to change the spelling adopted by different contributors. Titles of books cited have been printed in italics, and a list of the abbreviations used for books, periodicals, places of publications *etc.* has been appended. Volumes have been indicated by Roman, and pages by Arabic, numerals, with a dot between the two, but without any words like Vol. or p; pp. *etc.*

As copious footnotes giving full references to books and articles in periodicals have been added throughout the work, it has not been thought necessary to add a long bibliography at the end of the volume. Only a select bibliography is given containing a list of important works of a general nature and such other references as have been specially suggested by the writers of the different chapters.

Calcutta,  
April 15, 1943.

R. C. MAJUMDAR

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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The map of 'India within the Ganges' from Ptolemy's *Geography* is reproduced from *The Early History of Bengal*, by F. J. Monahan.

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D.M.—Dacca Museum.

I.M.—Indian Museum, Calcutta.

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184. Nativity of Buddha (Painting from ms. 4713. A.S.B.).  
LXXIX. 185. Śaṣṭakṣari Lokeśvara. Painting from ms. A. 15, A.S.B.  
186. Avalokiteśvara. Painting from ms. A. 15, A.S.B.  
187. Śyāmā Tārā. Painting from ms. A. 15, A.S.B.  
188. Prajñā-pāramitā. Painting from ms. A. 15, A.S.B.  
LXXX. 189. Lokanātha. Coloured reproduction from ms. A. 15, A.S.B.  
190. Mahāsri Tārā. Coloured reproduction from ms. A. 15, A.S.B.



## ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

- Page 49, f.n. 1. Add:* Kulaikuri cp. (G.E. 120), (*Vaṅgaśrī*, Vaiśākha, 1350 B.S., pp. 415-21).
- Page 49, f.n. 5. Add:* The equivalent of the Gupta Year 188 current has been assumed to be 507-8 A.D. But, according to the theory of K. B. Pathak, the equivalent would be 506-7 A.D. (*IHQ*, vi. 47).
- *Page 60.* Two Copper-plate Grants of Śaśāṅka were discovered, somewhere in the Midnapore district, about six years ago, and a short account of them with photographs and a tentative reading were published in a local paper (*Mādhavī*, Āshādha 1345 B.S., pp. 3-6). They remained, however, unknown to scholars till the editor of this volume happened to see them in course of a recent visit to Midnapore (April 23, 1943) and brought them down to Calcutta. They have not yet been cleaned and properly studied, but the portion already deciphered by Dr. D. C. Sircar and the editor shows that both of them record grants of land during the reign of Śaśāṅka. One of these Grants was made by the *sāmanta-mahārāja* Somadatta who was the governor of Daṇḍabhukti to which administrative unit Utkala-deśa was also attached. The second Grant was made by *mahāpratihāra* Śubhakīrti, who also was the governor of Daṇḍabhukti-deśa under Śaśāṅka. Both the Grants were issued from the *adhikaraṇa* of Tāvira. One of the inscriptions contains a date which is probably *samvat* 230 or 330, but the numerical symbol for hundreds, used in this record, has not been met with before, and the interpretation is, therefore, doubtful. The date of the record, when finally fixed, is likely to throw new light on the history of Śaśāṅka.
- Page 137, para 2.* The conclusion drawn from the Bāghāura Image Ins. is supported by a new inscription, engraved on an image of Gaṇeśa, recently discovered in the village of Nārāyanpur, in the Tippera district. A paper-rubbing of the inscription was brought to Dr. D. C. Sircar on April 25, 1943, and he has been able to read the whole of it without much difficulty. The inscription records that the image was set up in the 4th regnal year of *Mahārājādhirāja* Mahipāladeva, by the merchant Buddhamitra, an inhabitant of Vilikandhaka in Samatāṭa. Dr. Sircar is inclined to identify this village with Vilakindaka mentioned in the Bāghāura Image Ins.
- Page 148, ll. 4-5.* The epithet "full moon in the clear sky of Vaṅga" is the result of a wrong reading of the text by the editor of this inscription. The correct reading is *śītāṁśu-vamśa* and not *śītāṅga-vanga*. The new reading, originally suggested by Paramananda Acharya in *Mayurbhanja Chronicle*, April 1942, has been verified by the editor of this volume.
- *Page 186. Add at end of footnote:* For a critical discussion on the legend of Gopichānd cf. *PTOC*, vi. 265 ff.
- Page 670. Add at end of para 1:* Two specific cases may be cited by way of illustrating the part played by the Bengalis in the ancient Indian colonisation in the Far East. In the first place, it appears from the Kalyāṇi Ins. that the settlement in Suvarṇabhūmi (Lower Burma) was apparently colonised from Bengal by the Golas (Gauḍas). Their name has become the Mon and Burmese appellation for all foreigners from the west (*IA*, 1894, p. 256; *Epigraphia Birmanica*, III. Part 1, p. 185, f.n. 12). Secondly, two Sanskrit inscriptions found in Cambodia exhibit so completely all the peculiarities of the Gauḍa style, as defined by Daṇḍin and other rhetoricians (*infra* p. 302), that the great French scholar Georges Coedès, who edited them, has expressed the view that the records were composed by a Paṇḍit who either belonged to Bengal or was trained there (*Mélanges Sylvain Lévi*, p. 213).



## ABBREVIATIONS

- ABI.** (**ABORI**).—Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
- AGI.**—Ancient Geography of India by Sir Alexander Cunningham.
- Ain.**—Ain-i-Akbari (if reference is to Persian text, the word "text" is added; if to Blochmann and Jarret's translation, "trans." is added).
- Ait. Ar.**—Aitareya Āraṇyaka.
- AJV.**—Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes.—Vol. III, Orientalia. Published by Calcutta University.
- An. SS.**—Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series.
- AR.**—See **RA**.
- AS.**—Archaeological Survey Reports of the different Circles. (The initial letter of the Circle is added within ordinary brackets).
- AS-Burma.**—Archaeological Survey Report, Burma.
- ASC.**—Archaeological Survey Reports, by Sir A. Cunningham.
- ASI.**—Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India.
- ASM.**—Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.
- Auf.-Cat.**—Catalogus Catalogorum by T. Aufrecht, Leipzig 1891.
- Banerjea-Icon.**—Development of Hindu Iconography by J. N. Banerjea, Calcutta University 1941.
- BCL-Cat.**—Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Baroda Central Library.
- Beal-Life.**—The Life of Hiuen Tsang by the Shaman Hwui Li. Tr. by S. Beal. London 1911.
- Beal-Records.**—Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Tr. from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsang by S. Beal.
- BEFEO.**—Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Hanoi.
- Belv.-Lect.**—Lectures on Vedānta by S. K. Belvalkar.
- Belv.-Phil.**—History of Indian Philosophy by S. K. Belvalkar.
- Belv.-Systems.**—Systems of Sanskrit Grammar by S. K. Belvalkar.
- Ben-SS.**—Benares Sanskrit Series.
- BG.**—Bombay Gazetteer.
- B. GS-Cat.**—Catalogue of Mss. in Gujarat, Sindh etc. by G. Bühler.
- Bhandarkar-List.**—A List of Inscriptions of Northern India (Appendix to **EI**).



- Bhandarkar-Rep.**—Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bombay Presidency by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar.
- Bhatt.-Cat.**—Catalogue of Sculptures in the Dacca Museum by N. K. Bhattasali.
- BI.**—Bāṅgālār Itihāsa, Part I, 2nd ed. (in Bengali) by R. D. Banerji.
- Bibl. Ind.**—Bibliotheca Indica. Published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
- Bod.-Cat.**—Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Oxford, 1905.
- BSOS.**—Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London.
- BSS.**—Bombay Sanskrit Series.
- Bu-ston.**—History of Buddhism by Bu-ston. Tr. E. Obermiller Heidelberg 1932.
- Cal. SS.**—Calcutta Sanskrit Series.
- CCBM.**—Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum, London.
- CCIM.**—Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.
- Chatterji-Lang.**—The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language by Suniti Kumar Chatterji. Calcutta University 1926.
- CHI.**—Cambridge History of India.
- CII.**—Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
- Cordier-Cat.**—Catalogue du fonds Tibétain de la Bibliothèque Nationale by P. Cordier. Paris 1908.
- CP.**—Copper-plate(s).
- CS.**—Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.
- DB.**—Dāyabhāga of Jimūtavāhana (Pages refer to the English tr. by H. T. Colebrooke).
- De-Poetics.**—Sanskrit Poetics by S. K. De.
- DG-Phil.**—History of Indian Philosophy by S. N. Dasgupta.
- DHNI.**—Dynastic History of Northern India by H. C. Ray.
- DOT.**—Dacca University Oriental Texts Series.
- DR.**—Dacca Review.
- DUS.**—Dacca University Studies.
- F & D.**—The History of Muhammadan India as told by its own Historians. Ed. Elliot and Dowson.
- Edelst.**—Edelsteinmine by A. Grünwedel. Petrograd 1914.
- Egg.-Cat.**—Catalogue of Sanskrit Mss. in the Library of the India Office, London, by J. Eggeling. London 1887.
- EHB.**—Early History of Bengal by F. J. Monahan.
- EHBP.**—The Early History of Bengal by Pramode Lal Paul. Calcutta 1939.

- EHBP.**—The Early History of Bengal by R. C. Majumdar.  
Dacca University 1924.
- EHI.**—The Early History of India by V. A. Smith.
- EI.**—Epigraphia Indica.
- EISMS.**—Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture by  
R. D. Banerji. Delhi 1933.
- Ep. Carn.**—Epigraphia Carnatica.
- ERE.**—Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
- Fa-hien.**—A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms. Tr. J. Legge.  
Oxford 1886.
- Foucher-Icon.**—Études sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde  
• d'après des documents nouveaux, par A. Foucher.  
Paris 1900.
- Gait.**—A History of Assam by Sir Edward Gait.
- GL.**—Gauḍa-lekha-mālā (in Bengali) by Akshaya Kumar  
Maitreya.
- GOS.**—Gaekwad Oriental Series.
- GP.**—Gurjara-Pratihāras by R. C. Majumdar (published in  
*JL. x*).
- GR.**—Gauḍa-rāja-mālā (in Bengali) by Ramaprasad Chanda.
- **GV.**—Gauḍa-vaho of Vākpatirāja. Ed. S. P. Pandit.
- HC.**—Harsha-charita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa.
- HC. Tr.**—English tr. of *HC.* by E. B. Cowell and F. W. Thomas.
- HK.**—History of Kāmarūpa by K. L. Barua.
- HNI.**—History of North-Eastern India by Radhagovinda Basak.  
Calcutta 1934.
- HSL.**—Haraprasāda-saṁvardhana-lekhamālā (in Bengali). Pub-  
lished by *VSP*.
- Hunter.**—Statistical Account of Bengal by W. W. Hunter.  
20 Vols.
- IA.**—Indian Antiquary, Bombay.
- IB.**—Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III, by N. G. Majumdar.
- IC.**—Indian Culture, Calcutta.
- IHI.**—An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text, by K. P.  
Jayaswal.
- IHQ.**—Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta.
- IMC.**—see *CCIM*.
- IMP.**—Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency, by V. Ranga-  
charya.
- IP.**—Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow by Sarat Chandra Das.
- I-tsing.**—A Record of the Buddhist Religion by I-tsing. Tr. by  
J. Takakusu.
- **JA.**—Journal Asiatique, Paris.

- JAHRS.**—Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Rajahmundry.
- JAOS.**—Journal of the American Oriental Society, New Haven.
- JARS.**—Journal of the Assam Research Society, Gauhati.
- JASB.**—Journal of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
- JBORS.**—Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Patna.
- JBRAS.** (*JBo.Br.RAS*).—Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
- JBTS.**—Journal of the Buddhist Texts Society, London.
- JGIS.**—Journal of the Greater India Society, Calcutta.
- JIH.**—Journal of Indian History, Madras.
- JISOA.**—Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta.
- JL.**—Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta University.
- JOR.**—Journal of Oriental Research, Madras.
- JRAS.**—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London.
- JRASBL.**—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Third Series, Letters, Calcutta.
- Kam. Sas.**—Kāmarūpa-sāsanāvali (in Bengali), by Padmanath Bhattacharya.
- Kav.-Bibl.**—History and Bibliography of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Literature, by Gopinath Kaviraj.
- Keith-Drama.**—Sanskrit Drama, by Sir A. B. Keith.
- Keith-Lit.**—History of Sanskrit Literature, by Sir A. B. Keith.
- KS.**—Kashmir Sanskrit Texts, Allahabad.
- KV.**—Kāla-viveka of Jimūtavāhana (Bibl. Ind.)
- Levi-Népal.**—Le Népal, by Sylvain Lévi.
- Lüders-List.**—A List of Brāhmī Inscriptions other than those of Aśoka, by Heinrich Lüders (Appendix to *EI. X.*).
- MASB.**—Memoirs of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
- M. Cat.**—Descriptive Catalogue of Mss. in Madras Government Oriental Library.
- Mitra-Nepal.**—Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal, by Rajendra Lal Mitra. Calcutta 1882.
- Mitra-Notices.**—Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts by Rajendra Lal Mitra.
- MMK.**—Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa. Ed. T. Ganapati Sastri. (*J*) after the abbreviation, denotes the text edited by K. P. Jayaswal in *IHI*.
- Nach. Gott.**—Nachrichten von der Kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philolog.-histor. Klasse.

- Nasir*.—*Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*. Tr. by H. Raverty.  
*NIA*.—New Indian Antiquary, Bombay.  
*NSP*.—Nirṇaya-sāgara Press.  
*Num. Suppl.*.—Numismatic Supplement to *JASB*.  
*Orissa*.—Orissa, by R. D. Banerji.  
*OTF*.—Oriental Translation Fund (of *RAS*).  
*OZ*.—Ostasiatische Zeitschrift, Berlin and Leipzig.  
*Pag Sam Jon Zang*.—Pag Sam Jon Zang of Sumpā Mkhan-Po  
 Yese Pal Jor. Ed. Sarat Chandra Das. Calcutta 1908.  
*Paharpur*.—Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal, by K. N. Dikshit  
 (ASM. No. 55).  
*PB*.—Pālas of Bengal, by R. D. Banerji (*MASB*. Vol. V).  
*PCB*.—K. B. Pathak Commemoration Volume.  
*PHAI*.—Political History of Ancient India by H. C. Ray-  
 chaudhuri.  
*PHC*.—Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.  
*Proc. ASB*.—Proceedings of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of  
 Bengal.  
*PRP*.—Prāyaścitta-prakarana of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva. Ed.  
 Girish Chandra Vidyāratna. Published by VRS.  
*PSC*.—Proceedings of the Indian Science Congress.  
*PTOC*.—Proceedings and Transactions of the All-India Oriental  
 Conference.  
*RA*. (*AR*).—The Rāshtrakūṭas and Their Times by A. S.  
 Altekar.  
*Rao-Icon*.—Elements of Hindu Iconography, by T. A. Gopinatha  
 Rao.  
*RC*.—Rāmacharita of Sandhyākara Nandī.  
*RC*.<sup>1</sup>—Rāmacharita. Ed. Haraprasad Sastri (*MASB*. v).  
*RC*.<sup>2</sup>—Rāmacharita. Ed. R. C. Majumdar, R. G. Basak and  
 N. G. Banerji. Published by VRS.  
*Renn*.—Bengal Atlas by J. Rennell.  
*R. Phil*.—History of Indian Philosophy by Sir S. Radhakrishnan.  
*RT*.—Rājatarāṅgiṇī of Kalhaṇa. (Tr. indicates translation by  
 Stein).  
*Saraswati-Sculpture*.—Early Sculpture of Bengal, by Sarasi  
 Kumar Saraswati (Reprinted from *JL*. xxx).  
*Sastri-Cat*.—Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Mss. in the  
 Government Collection under the care of the (Royal)  
 Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. By MM. Hara-  
 prasad Sastri.  
*SBE*.—Sacred Books of the East Series, Harvard.  
*SIA*.—Studies in Indian Antiquities, by H. C. Raychaudhuri.  
*SII*.—South Indian Inscriptions.

- SPP*.—Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā (in Bengali), Calcutta.
- SPS*.—Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat Series, Calcutta.
- Sumpā*.—see Pag Sam Jon Zang.
- Takakusu-I-tsing*.—see I-tsing.
- Tantras*.—Studies in the Tantras, by Prabodh Chandra Bagchi.
- Tar*.—Tāranātha, Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien. German tr. by A. Schiefner.
- Tar.-Ges*.—see Tar.
- TCM*.—Triennial Catalogue of Madras Government Manuscript Library for 1919-22.
- TK*.—History of Kanauj, by R. S. Tripathi.
- TSS*.—Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.
- V. Cat*.—Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit and Prakrit Mss. in the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society by H. D. Velankar.
- Ven. P*.—Venkatesvara Press.
- VJI*.—Vaṅger Jātiya Itihāsa. Rājanya-kāṇḍa (in Bengali), by Nagendranath Vasu.
- VP*.—Śrīvāṇī-vilāsa Press.
- VRS*.—Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi.
- VRS. M*.—Monograph of the *VRS*.
- VRS.-Rep*.—Annual Report of the *VRS*.
- VSP*.—Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishat, Calcutta.
- VSP.-Cat*.—Handbook to the Sculptures in the *VSP*. Museum, by Manomohan Ganguly. (This abbreviation has also been used in Ch. XI as indicating *Catalogue of Sanskrit Mss. in VSP*.)
- VSS*.—Vizianagram Sanskrit Series.
- Watters*.—On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, by T. Watters.
- Wint.-Gesch*.—Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur, by M. Winternitz.
- Wint.-Lit*.—History of Sanskrit Literature, by M. Winternitz (English tr. of *Wint.-Gesch*). Published by Calcutta University.
- WZKM*.—Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Vienna.
- ZDMG*.—Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Leipzig.

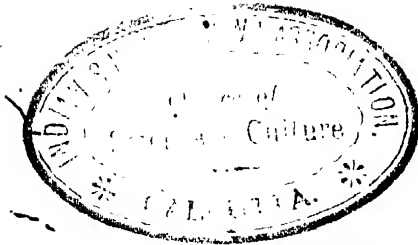












## CHAPTER I

### PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

#### I. PHYSICAL ASPECTS

BENGAL is the name given to the eastern province of British India which stretches from the Himālayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south, and from the Brahmaputra, the Kangsa, the Surmā, and the Sajjuk rivers in the east to the Nāgar, the Barākar, and the lower reaches of the Suvarṇarekhā in the west. The area described above lies roughly between  $27^{\circ} 9'$  and  $20^{\circ} 50'$  north latitude and  $86^{\circ} 35'$  and  $92^{\circ} 30'$  east longitude. The extent of the province, excluding the States of Hill Tippera, Cooch Bihar, and Sikkim, and the surface area covered by large rivers and estuaries is 77,521 square miles and the total population a little over sixty millions. The majority of the people in the western districts are Hindus. In the east Muslims predominate. The area of some of the southern districts is increasing owing to the recession of the Bay in the south.

The territory inhabited by the Bengali-speaking race stretches far beyond the political boundaries of the modern province of Bengal. It extends to the east into the districts of Goalpara, Sylhet, and Cachar which form parts of the province of Assam, and to the west into the districts of Manbhum, Santal Parganas, and Purnea which are included within the official boundaries of Bihar. The *sarkārs* of Sylhet and Purnea, the *parganā* of Akmahal (now Rājmahal) and the famous Pass of Teliagarhi, now in the Santal Parganas, formed integral parts of the *subah* of Bengal in the days of Akbar. Rennell's map of the northern provinces shows that even as late as 1779 Purnea was included within Bengal and not "Bahar" i.e., Bihar. The northern boundary of the province reached the summit of the Himālayas as early as the time of the Gupta kings. In the east "the valley of the Bārak with its two Districts of Cachar and Sylhet had formed the north-eastern part of the Dacca Division" of Bengal as late as the year 1874.

The province of Bengal lacks some of the extraordinary varieties of physical aspect for which the great sub-continent, of which it is an integral part, is justly famous. It has no deserts

and no hills or ridges except on the fringe in the extreme north, east, and west. It cannot boast of anything comparable to the purple waters of the Kashmirian lakes which reflect the splendours of Haramukh, the gushing streams of Central India which leap into falls amidst the marble rocks near Jubbulpore, or the backwaters and cascades of Malabar that lend charm to the scenery of the western sea-board of the southern Presidency. It can, however, justly take pride in the snow-capped peaks with gold-hued crests in the northern district of Darjeeling, a vast riverine plain which forms the focus of three great river-systems where the country "widens out into a panorama of irrigated fertility," of swamps and flats in the south cut up by hundreds of coves and creeks, once the "royal throne of kings," now the residence of the lord of the jungles.

The hand of nature has split up the province into four grand divisions which fairly correspond to its major political divisions in historic epochs. North of the main branch of the Ganges, now known as the Padmā, and west of the Brahmaputra, lies the extensive region which embraces the modern Rajshahi Division and the State of Cooch Bihar. The most important part of this area constituted the ancient land of Puṇḍravardhana of which Varendrī was a well-known district (*maṇḍala*). West of another branch of the Ganges, namely the Bhāgīrathī, or the Hooghly, stretches the great Burdwan Division—the Vardhamāna-*bhukti* of the times of yore. A considerable part of the area answered to the flourishing territory of ancient Rāḍhā. Between the Bhāgīrathī, the Padmā, the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra, and the estuary of the Meghnā lies the central region of Bengal embracing the bulk of the Presidency Division and a considerable portion of the Dacca Division. This area was known to Pliny and Ptolemy as the territory of the Gangaridai, and to Kālidāsa as the land of the Vaṅgas who were specially noted for their skill in handling boats. Beyond the Meghnā in the east stretches the Chittagong Division within whose embrace are supposed to lie the buried remains of the royal seat of Samatāṭa. It has to be noted that the divisions of ancient Bengal referred to above at times transgressed the limits set by nature.

• The most characteristic physical feature of Bengal proper is its river-system. The two mighty rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, with their numerous branches and tributaries have played a large part in shaping its destiny. By the vast deposit of silt carried from uplands, they have created the enormous area of deltaic lowlands and the process is still going on in full vigour. The same fluvial action is also responsible for the constant shiftings

of river-beds to an extent unknown in any other part of India with the exception, perhaps, of Sind. These changes in river-courses have made and unmade flourishing cities and thriving marts, and sometimes changed the whole outlook of large areas. In view of the great influence exerted by the river-system on the history of Bengal, it is necessary to make a brief reference to its outstanding features.

The Ganges enters the province of Bengal at the point where the low-lying Rajmahal Hills almost touch its waters. The narrow passes of Teliagarhi and Sikragully (Sikrigali) form excellent strategic points in Bengal's first line of defence. It is not, therefore, a mere accident that far-famed capital cities like Gauda-Lakhnawati, Pandua, Tanda and Rajmahal should have grown up in the neighbourhood of this salient.

The present course of the Ganges, after it has swept in a curve round the spurs and slopes of the Rajmahal Hills, is very different from what it was before the sixteenth century. In those days it flowed further north and east and the city of Gauda was probably on its right bank. There has been more than one shifting towards the south and west before the Ganges reached its present course, and the dry beds of some of its old channels can still be traced.

About twenty-five miles to the south of ancient Gauda the Ganges divides itself into two branches, the Bhāgīrathī, of which the lower portion is called the Hooghly, running almost due south, and the Padmā flowing in a south-easterly direction. To-day the enormous volume of the waters of the Ganges is carried mainly by the Padmā, while the upper part of the Bhāgīrathī has shrunk to a very shallow stream. But formerly the Bhāgīrathī was in all probability the more important channel of the Ganges. It is difficult to determine when the great change took place, but there is hardly any doubt that by the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D. the Padmā already ranked as the main stream of the Ganges.

One important evidence adduced in favour of the view that the Bhāgīrathī was the principal stream of the Ganges in ancient times, is the great sanctity attached to it by the Hindus. The mighty Padmā causes havoc and creates terror, but is not looked upon with great veneration, nor does it claim any traditional religious sanctity.

The earlier course of the lower Ganges, as it rushed down the channel of the Bhāgīrathī, was somewhat different from what it is to-day. Small rivulets from the west like the Bansloi, the Mor, and the Ajay fell into it after it had broken off from the parent river, as now, ~~but~~ at Trivenī (near Hooghly) it branched off into three

streams. These were the Sarasvatī flowing south-west past Sātgaon (Saptagrāma), the Yamunā (Jumna) running its course south-east down its present bed, and the Bhāgīrathī proper, the middle offshoot, gliding south down the present Hooghly channel up to Calcutta and then through the Ādi-Gaṅgā (Tolly's Nulla) past Kalighat, Baruipur, and Magra to the sea. There are reasons to believe that the Sarasvatī flowed into an estuary near modern Tamluk and received not only the waters of the Rupnārāyan and the Dāmodar but those of many smaller streams issuing from the hills of the Santal Parganas. Sometime after the eighth century A.D. the port of Tamluk lost its importance on account of the silting up of the mouth of the Sarasvatī and the consequent shifting of its course. Its place was eventually taken up by Saptagrāma or Sātgaon, higher up the river, which figures as the Muslim capital of South-western Bengal in the fourteenth century A.D. In the sixteenth century the main waters of the Bhāgīrathī began to flow through the Hooghly channel. Sātgaon was ruined, and first Hooghly, then Calcutta, took its place. The upper Sarasvatī to-day is a dead river, but the Bhāgīrathī or the Hooghly has deserted the old Ādi-Gaṅgā channel and flows through the lower course of the Sarasvatī below Sankrail.

The course of the Padmā has also considerably changed during the last four centuries. It is difficult to trace accurately its various channels, but the probability is that it at first flowed past Rāmpur Boāliā through the Chalan Bil (or Jhil), the Dhaleswari, and the Budigaṅgā rivers past Dacca into the Meghnā estuary. In the eighteenth century the lower course of the Padmā lay much further to the south. The river flowed through the districts of Faridpur and Bākarganj, and joined the Meghnā estuary just above the island of Dakshin Shāhbāzpur, about 25 miles due south of Chāndpur. Rājnagar, the famous city of Rājā Rājavallabha, was then on its left bank, and hard by this city ran the river Kāligāṅgā connecting the Padmā with the Meghnā river. About the middle of the nineteenth century A.D., the main volume of the waters of the Padmā flowed through this channel, which came to be known as the Kirtināśā. Gradually the Padmā adopted its present course.

In addition to the two main streams, the Bhāgīrathī and the Padmā, the water of the Ganges reaches the sea through numerous other branches thrown off by the latter. Two of these, the Jalāṅgī and the Mātābhāṅgā flow into the Bhāgīrathī and swell the waters of its lower channel, the Hooghly. Many other old branches like the Bhairab and the Kumār are now dying rivers and their place has been taken by the Madhumatī and the Ārialkhān.

The Padmā is joined in its lower course by the Brahmaputra





and the Meghnā, and the combined rivers form the mighty Meghnā estuary. At present the main volume of the waters of the Brahmaputra rolls down the Jamunā which meets the Padmā near Goalundo. But the old course of the Brahmaputra was very different: after tracing a curve round the Garo Hills on the west it took a south-eastern course near Dewanganj, and passing by Jamalpur (near which the Jhināi branched off from it), Mymensing, and the neighbourhood of the Madhupur Jungle in the district of Mymensing, it flowed through the eastern part of the Dacca district, and having thrown off a branch, called Lakhmiyā, passed by Nāngalband to the south-west of Sonārgāon and fell into the Dhaleswari. The Lakhmiyā ran almost parallel to the main course, and passing by Narayanganj met the Dhaleswari a little to the west of its junction with the main stream of the Brahmaputra. This course of the Brahmaputra was already deserted in the eighteenth century when it flowed further east and joined the Meghnā near Bhairab-bazar in the Mymensing district. But, as in the case of the Ganges, religious sanctity still attaches to the older course, and even to-day thousands of pilgrims take their bath at the muddy pools near Nāngalband. But the easternmost channel, too, soon dwindled into an insignificant stream. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Jamuna river increased in importance, and since about 1850 A.D. it has become the main channel of the Brahmaputra.

Of the numerous rivers in Northern Bengal that flowed into the Ganges or the Brahmaputra, a few deserve special mention as having changed their courses considerably in comparatively recent times. The river Tistā at first ran due south from Jalpaiguri in three channels, namely, the Karatoyā to the east, the Punarbhavā (Purnabhabā) to the west, and the Ātrāi in the centre. This perhaps accounts for its name *Trisrotā* (possessed of three streams) which has been shortened or corrupted into Tistā. Of these the Punarbhavā emptied itself into the Mahānandā. The Ātrāi, passing through a vast marshy area known as the Chalan Bil (Jhil), joined the Karatoyā, and the united stream fell into the Padmā near Jafarganj. The Karatoyā was once a large and sacred river and we have still a *Karatoyā-māhātmya* which bears testimony to its sanctity. On its banks stood the city of Puṇḍravardhana whose antiquity reaches back to the Maurya period. The dwindling Karatoyā still flows by the ruins of this ancient city at Mahāsthānagarh in the Bogra district, and forms a fixed landmark in the shifting sands of the fluvial history of this province.

As regards the Tistā, the parent stream of the three famous rivers of Northern Bengal, Hunter calls attention to the fact that



in the destructive floods of 1787 A.D., it suddenly forsook its old channel and rushing south-east ran into the Brahmaputra. There are, however, reasons to believe that the bed to which the mighty torrent turned on this occasion is an old one which had been deserted in ages long gone by. The sudden change in the course of the Tistā in 1787 A.D. was originally regarded by many as having caused the Brahmaputra to sweep through the Jamuna channel, but this view no longer finds general acceptance.

The change in the course of the river Kosi (*Kausikī*) is, perhaps, more remarkable than even that of the Tistā. This river which now flows through the district of Purnea and unites its waters with the Ganges at a point much higher up than Rājmaḥal, originally ran eastward and fell into the Brahmaputra. The channel of the Kosi must have, therefore, been steadily shifting towards the west right across the whole breadth of Northern Bengal. There was a time when the Kosi and the Mahānandā joined the Karatoyā, and formed a sort of ethnic boundary line between the civilised people on the south, and the Kochs, Kirātas, etc., on the north.

It would appear from what has been stated above that great changes have taken place in the courses of some of the important rivers in Bengal during the last four or five hundred years. Though positive evidence is lacking, we must presume the possibility of similar changes in the remoter past. It is to be regretted that we have no knowledge of their nature and extent. In any case we must bear in mind that during the period with which this volume deals the courses of the rivers in Bengal were probably somewhat different not only from those of the present time, but even from those in the recent past of which we have more definite knowledge. This point must not be lost sight of in discussing any geographical question concerning ancient Bengal on the basis of the position of the rivers.

The frequent changes in the courses of rivers have been responsible for the ruin of many old places, at times by washing them off, and more often by making them unhealthy and inaccessible. Reference has already been made to Tāmralipti and Saptagrāma. It is believed that the shifting of the beds of the Kosi river gave rise to the swamps and floods that contributed to the ruin of the city of Gauḍa. The capricious Padmā has swept away so many cities and villages within living memory, that we can well imagine the devastating effect of this and other rivers on the province of Bengal. In addition to the frequent shiftings of courses, the vast deposit of silt by the rivers in the deltaic region, between the Bhāgirathī and the Padmā, has been a potent instrument in

changing its physical aspect to a considerable extent. For the deposit of silt constantly raises the level of land in some areas and makes the other regions comparatively lower and water-logged. The vast Sunderban area in the delta offers an intriguing problem. Many hold the view that the Sunderbans had once been a populous tract but were depopulated by the ravages of nature and the depredations of marauding peoples like the Maghs and the Portuguese. References to the *Khāḍi-vishaya* or *-maṇḍala*, a flourishing district in the Sena period which, in later ages, became part of the dense forest, and to the country between the Biskhālī and Rābanābād which was depopulated by Maghs, may be recalled in this connection. Epigraphic evidence proves that the marshy area called Koṭālīpādā, near Gopalganj in the district of Faridpur, was once a thriving seat of civilisation and possibly a centre of sea-borne trade and commerce. The change in the condition of the interior of the districts of Jessore and Khulna in recent times also well illustrates what might have taken place on a much larger scale during the preceding centuries.<sup>1</sup>

## II. BENGAL IN HOLY WRIT

The historic lands included within the area now known as Bengal find no mention in the Vedic hymns. The horizon of the earliest Aryan singers is apparently limited to the region extending eastwards only as far as Bhāgalpur. The theologians of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>2</sup> however, refer to peoples who lived in large numbers beyond the frontiers of Aryandom and were classed as *dasyus*. Among such folks we find mention of the Puṇḍras. Puṇḍranagara, the capital city of this ancient people, is proved by epigraphic evidence to have been situated in the Bogra district of Northern Bengal. Some writers have traced the name of the Vaṅgas, another early Bengal tribe, to the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*.<sup>3</sup> In the text occur

<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion, with references to authorities, of the changes in the courses of rivers, cf. *Physical Features of Ancient Bengal* by Dr. R. C. Majumdar (*D. R. Bhandarkar Volume*, pp. 341-364) and *The Changing Face of Bengal—a Study in Riverine Economy* by Dr. Radhakamal Mookerjee (published by the University of Calcutta). Reference may also be made to W. W. Hunter's *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, C. R. Wilson's *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, i. 128 ff, address on *The Waterways in East Bengal*, at the Rotary Club, Dacca, by J. W. E. Berry (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 15-6-38, p. 10) and *JASB.* 1895, pp. 1-24; also cf. S. C. Majumdar, *Rivers of the Bengal Delta*, 1941, and N. K. Bhattachali, *Antiquity of the Lower Ganges and its Courses* (*Science and Culture*, vii. 233-39).

<sup>2</sup> See *infra* p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> II. i. 1. Keith, *Āit. Ār.* 101, 200.

the words "*Vayāmsi Vaṅgāvagadhās-Cerapādāḥ*." The expression *Vaṅgāvagadhāḥ* has been emended to *Vaṅga-Magadhāḥ*, that is, the peoples of Vaṅga and Magadha. The *Āraṇyaka* refers to them as folks who were guilty of transgression. Commentators, ancient and modern, differ as to the real meaning of the words used in the text. The possibility that the expressions in the *Āraṇyaka* signify old ethnic names is not excluded. But it is extremely hazardous to build any theory about the antiquity of the Vaṅgas on such fragile foundations.

The first unambiguous references to the Vaṅgas occur in the ancient epics and the *Dharmasūtras*. The Bodhāyana *Dharma-sūtra*<sup>1</sup> divides the land known to it into three ethnic or cultural belts which were regarded with varying degrees of esteem. The holiest of the three was Āryāvarta, lying between the Himālayas and the western Vindhya and watered by the upper Ganges and the Jumna. The zone that stood next in point of sanctity embraced Malwa, East and South Bihar, South Kathiawar, the Deccan, and the lower Indus valley. The outermost belt was formed by the *Arattas* of the Punjab, the *Puṇḍras* of North Bengal, the *Sauviras* occupying parts of Southern Punjab and Sind, the Vaṅgas of Central and Eastern Bengal, and the *Kalingas* of Orissa and adjoining tracts. The regions inhabited by these peoples were regarded as altogether outside the pale of Vedic culture. Persons who lived amidst these folks even for a temporary period were required to go through expiatory rites.

In the epics the Vaṅgas are no longer shunned as impure barbarians. The *Rāmāyaṇa*<sup>2</sup> mentions them in a list of peoples that entered into intimate political relations with the high-born aristocrats of Ayodhyā. The search parties that were sent to the east in quest of the heroine are asked to visit the land of the *Puṇḍras* and *Mandara*.<sup>3</sup> The last mentioned place reminds one of *Madāran* in Western Bengal (or *Mandār Hill* near *Bhāgalpur*).

In the Great Epic<sup>4</sup> *Bhīma* undertakes a hurricane campaign in the land we call Bengal. Having killed the king of *Modāgiri* (*Monghyr*) he fell on the mighty lord of the *Puṇḍras* as well as the potentate who ruled on the banks of the river *Kosi*. Having defeated them he attacked the king of the Vaṅgas. Next he reduced to subjection the lords of *Tāmralipta* (modern *Tamluk* in the

<sup>1</sup> i. 1. 25-31, L. Srinivasacharya's ed., pp. 11-13.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 10. 36-37—*Yāvadāvartate cakram tāvatī me Vasundharā* |

*Vaṅg-Āṅga-Magadhā-Matsyāḥ samṛiddhāḥ Kāśī-Kosalāḥ* ||.

<sup>3</sup> iv. 40. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup> *Mbh.* ii. 30.

Midnapore district) and Karvaṭa, apparently a neighbouring place,<sup>1</sup> as well as the rulers of the Suhmas (in the present Hooghly district), those who lived in maritime regions, and all the hordes of outlandish barbarians (*mlechchhas*). Having conquered these territories and despoiling them of their riches, the mighty victor advanced to the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra). From all the kings of the *mlechchhas* who dwelt on the sea-coast he exacted tribute and precious gems of various kinds. In connection with the same campaign we have reference to a people called Pra-Suhmas who must have lived near the Suhmas in some part of Western Bengal.

Further light on the topography of Bengal in the epic age and the growing esteem in which the land was held by poets of upper India is thrown by the *Tirthayātrā* section of the *Vanaparvan*.<sup>2</sup> We have here pointed reference to the sanctity of the river Karatoyā which is known to have flowed past the city of Puṇḍra-nagara (Mahāsthāngarh) in North Bengal and of the spot where the Ganges emptied itself into the sea (*Gaṅgāyāstatra rājendra sāgarasya cha saṅgaṇe*).

Jaina writers of the *Āchārāṅga-sūtra*<sup>3</sup> describe the land of the Lāḍhas (Rāḍhā) in West Bengal as a pathless country inhabited by a rude folk who attacked peaceful monks. In one of the *Upāṅgas*,<sup>4</sup> however, the Lāḍhas as well as the Vaṅgas are classed as Aryans. The latter are represented as possessing the city of Tāmalitti (Tāmrālipti or Tamluk). The Lāḍhas had Koṭivarisa for their chief city. Koṭivarisa (Koṭivarsha) has been identified with modern Bāngarh in the Dinajpur district. In the Gupta and Pāla periods Koṭivarsha was included in the Puṇḍravardhana province and not in Rāḍhā.

The *Āchārāṅga-sūtra*<sup>5</sup> divides the land of Lāḍha into two parts named Vajrabhūmi and Subbha(=Suhma-)bhūmi. Vajrabhūmi or Vajrabhūmi had its capital, according to commentators, at Panitabhūmi. The name Vajrabhūmi, "Land of Diamond," reminds us of the *sarkar* of Madāran in South-west Bengal, mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* in which there was a diamond mine. The *sarkar* answers to parts of the modern Birbhum, Burdwan, and Hooghly districts. The 'Land of Diamond' may have extended westwards as far as Kokhrā on the borders of Bihar which was famous for its diamond mines in the days of the Emperor Jahāngīr.

The Suhmas are, as we have seen above, mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. They also appear in the Buddhist *Saṃyutta Nikāya*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is tempting to identify the Karvaṭas with the Kharwārs of Midnapore and other districts of Western Bengal (Hunter, III. 49, 51 etc.).

<sup>2</sup> Ch. 85. 2-4. <sup>3</sup> I. 8. 3. See *infra* p. 30. <sup>4</sup> IA. 1891, p. 375.

<sup>5</sup> I. 8. 3; Jacobi in *S.B.E.* xxii. 84, 204.

<sup>6</sup> v. 89; Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, II. 1252.

and the *Talapatta Jātaka*<sup>1</sup> under the name of Sumbhas. Their chief town was Setaka (or Desaka). A Śvetakādhishthāna is often referred to in the inscriptions of the Eastern Gāṅgas, but its identity is uncertain.

The Great Epic distinguishes the Suhmas from the people of Tamluk, but the *Daśakumāra-charita*<sup>2</sup> includes Dāmalipta (Tāmralipta or Tamluk) in the Suhma territory. The *Pavanadūta*<sup>3</sup> of Dhoyī (twelfth century A.D.) places the Suhma country on the Ganges and refers to the famous shrines of Murāri (Vishṇu), of Raghukulaguru (the Sun), and of Ardhanārīśvara (combined form of Śiva and his consort) that adorned the land. Mention is also made of a city of Śiva (*Chandrārdhamauli*) and an embankment that commemorated King Vallālasena. These details, to which attention is invited by several writers,<sup>4</sup> point to the Trivenī-Saptagrāma-Pandua area in the Hooghly district as the heart of the Suhma country. Nilakaṇṭha<sup>5</sup> equates Suhma with Rāḍhā. According to the *Digvijaya-prakāśa*,<sup>6</sup> the last mentioned territory lies to the east of Birbhum and to the north of the river Dāmodar. The "Land of Diamond" should be excluded from that part of Rāḍhā which was known as Suhma.

Early Buddhist writers who knew the "Sumbhas" show little acquaintance with the Vaṅgas. A knowledge of that ancient people is sometimes inferred from the epithets Vaṅgantaputta and Vaṅgiśa found in the Pāli canon.<sup>7</sup> But the earliest clear Buddhist literary reference to Vaṅga is probably that contained in the *Milinda-pañho*.<sup>8</sup>

Pāṇini, who flourished long before the second century B.C., knows Gauḍapura<sup>9</sup> but not Vaṅga. The last mentioned territory is, however, well-known to his great commentator, Patañjali.<sup>10</sup>

### III. THE HISTORIC PERIOD

The literary references in the Vedic, Epic, and Sūtra texts, both Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical, do not admit of a definite

<sup>1</sup> *Jat.* i. No. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Sixth Uchchihvāsa, *Mitrāguptacharitam*.

<sup>3</sup> vv. 27 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. D. Banerji, *JASB.* 1909, pp. 245 ff; G. M. Sarkar, *JL.* xvi. 23, 57, 78; C. Chakravarti, *Pavanadūtam* of Dhoyī, Introduction, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Commentary on *Mbh.* ii. 30, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Varumati*, 1340 (n.s.), Māgha, p. 610. The work is attributed to a contemporary of Pratāpāditya (S. Mitra, *Yaśohar-Khulnār Itihāsa*, 192).

<sup>7</sup> *EHBR.* 8; *Manoratha-pūraṇi*, i. 270; *Apadāna*, ii. 497 (v. 29).

<sup>8</sup> Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, ii. 802; *S.B.E.* xxxvi. ii. 269 (Text 359). The Vaṅga (Vaṅka) of the *Mahānidāsa*, i. 154, may not refer to the famous Janapada in Bengal, but to Bangka near Sumatra.

<sup>9</sup> vi. 2. 99-100.

<sup>10</sup> iv. 1. 4; iv. 2. 1; Kielhorn's ed., vol. ii. 269, 282.





chronological arrangement. For a chronological treatment of the subject it is necessary to turn to the evidence of literature, Indian and foreign, assignable to well-known epochs, and that of early epigraphs.

The historians of Alexander refer to a people whom they call the Gangaridai. According to the evidence of Pliny, Ptolemy, and many other classical writers, the people in question occupied the country of the lower Ganges and its distributaries. Jaina and Buddhist legends connect the names of the great Mauryas and their contemporaries with Puṇḍravardhana, and Chinese pilgrims found Aśokan monuments in various parts of the province. The existence of Puṇḍrañagara in the Maurya epoch is, in the opinion of some scholars, proved by an old Brāhmī inscription,<sup>1</sup> unearthed at Mahāsthāngarh in the Bogra district.

Glimpses of Bengal in the early centuries after Christ are afforded by the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, the Geography of Ptolemy, the *Milinda-pañho*, and the Nāgārjunikonda inscriptions. The *Periplus*, describing the east coast of India, mentions the river Ganges and a market-town on its bank which had the same name as the river. The city of Gange is also mentioned by Ptolemy who describes it as a metropolis and distinguishes it from Tamalites *i.e.* Tāmralipti. Of special interest is Ptolemy's reference to the five<sup>2</sup> mouths of the Ganges: namely, the Kambyson mouth, the most western; the second mouth, called Mega; the third called Kamberikhon; the fourth styled Pseudostomon; and the fifth mouth, Antibole. Opinions differ in regard to the identification of these distributaries. In the opinion of the present writer, Kambyson stands for Sanskrit Kapiśā mentioned by Kālidāsa. This answers to the modern Kāsāi which flows past Midnapore and, like the Rupnārāyan, may have been erroneously supposed to be a branch of the Ganges. The Mega has been identified with the Hooghly. The Kamberikhon is said to represent the Kobbadak or Kabadak (Kapotāksha), the "Cobbaduck" of Rennell's map, which flows past Jhinkargachha. A more plausible identification would be with the Kumāra (Kumāraka) river which issues out of the Mātābhāngā branch of the Padmā and joining the Gorai, ultimately empties itself into the Haringhātā estuary and the Ārialkhān.<sup>3</sup> The Pseudostomon, "False Mouth," is probably so called as it lay concealed behind numerous islands. It is taken to correspond to

<sup>1</sup> Barua, *IHQ*. 1934, pp. 57 ff; D. R. Bhandarkar, *EI*. xxi. 83 ff; P. C. Sen, *IHQ*. 1933, pp. 722 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo (xv. i. 13) refers to 'a single mouth.'

<sup>3</sup> Hunter, ii. 172 ff; v. 261 ff etc.



the estuary of the Padmā and the Meghnā. The Antibole (lit. "thrown-back")<sup>1</sup> is regarded by some as identical with the old Gaṅgā that flows past Dacca. The precise identity must await future research.

The *Milinda-pañho*<sup>2</sup> mentions Vaṅga in a list of maritime countries where ships congregated for purposes of trade. In the Nāgārjunikonda inscriptions<sup>3</sup> we have reference to Vaṅga in connection with the missionary activities of "the masters and fraternities of monks" of Ceylon.

From the fourth century A.D. onwards the epigraphic records which are assignable to distinct chronological periods (such as the Gupta, early post-Gupta, Pāla and Sena ages) enable us to trace more clearly the chief political or geographical divisions and administrative units of Bengal. Unfortunately the boundaries of some of the units cannot be fixed with any degree of certainty, and the difficulty is increased by the fact that the extent of even well-known divisions like Gauḍa, Vaṅga, and Rāḍhā varied in different ages. All that we can do at the present state of our knowledge is to enumerate the more important divisions with short explanatory notes of the various connotations of the names gleaned from epigraphic and literary sources.

#### GAUḌA

The precise location of Gauḍa, which emerges from obscurity before the sun of the Guptas set for ever, is a matter regarding which there has been considerable divergence of opinion. As already stated, a Gaudapura is mentioned by Pāṇini. Products of Gauḍa are well known to the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*.<sup>4</sup> The country is also familiar to Vātsyāyana, the author of the *Kāmasūtra*.<sup>5</sup> We learn from the Haraha inscription<sup>6</sup> of 554 A.D. that Śānavarman Maukhari forced the Gauḍa people to seek refuge in the sea. This points to a country not very far from the sea-coast.<sup>7</sup> In the seventh

<sup>1</sup> Has it any reference to the action of the Brahmaputra in silting up and driving back the Ganges? (Hunter, v. 206).

<sup>2</sup> See *supra* p. 10, fn. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *El.* xx. 22 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Book II. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Benares ed. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Book Depot), pp. 115, 294.

<sup>6</sup> *El.* xiv. 117.

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to recall in this connection the statement of Abu'l-Fazl (*Ain*, II. 120) that the Ganges "after spreading into a thousand channels joins the sea at Sālgāon." Fredericke (1570 A.D.) found an "infinite number of ships" at Buttor (Bator) near Sālgāon (Hunter, III. 300). The estuary (cf. Khāḍī of inscriptions) of the Sarasvati may have been regarded in those days as an arm of the sea. The Gauḍa-vishaya lay not very far from it. A few Purāṇas including the *Matsya* refer to the Gauḍa-dēśa as the territory where a very ancient Ikshvāku king

century A.D. a Gauḍa king had undoubtedly his capital at Karnasuvarṇa near Rungamutty (Rāṅgāmāti), some twelve miles to the south of Murshidabad.<sup>1</sup>

The *Bṛihat-saṃhitā* of Varāhamihira<sup>2</sup> (sixth century A.D.) clearly restricts Gauḍa to a part of Bengal which is distinguished not only from Pauṇḍra (North Bengal), Tāmraliptika (part of the Midnapore district), Vaṅga and Samatāṭa (Central and Eastern Bengal), but also from Vardhamāna (Burdwan). Curiously enough, the *Bhavishya Purāṇa*<sup>3</sup> defines Gauḍa as a territory lying to the north of Burdwan and south of the Padmā. This corresponds to the kingdom of Gauḍa-Karnasuvarṇa described by writers of the seventh century A.D. The *Anargha-rāghava*<sup>4</sup> of Murāri (latter half of the eighth century A.D.) mentions Champā as the capital (*rājadhānī*) of the Gauḍas in the time of that poet. This city is probably identical with Champānagarī in the *sarkar* of Madāran mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. It stood on the left bank of the Dāmodar, north-west of the city of Burdwan.<sup>5</sup>

The records of the Pāla and the Sena dynasties and of contemporaneous families who held sway from the latter half of the eighth century A.D. to the Muslim conquest, enable us to glean some additional information about Gauḍa and its relation with Vaṅga during the period of their rule. The potentate who exercised supreme sovereignty in Bengal in the time of Nāgabhaṭa II Pratihāra (first part of the ninth century A.D.) is referred to as Vaṅgapati (lord of Vaṅga) in the Gwalior inscription of Bhoja I,<sup>6</sup> grandson of Nāgabhaṭa II. But from the time of Devapāla, and possibly from that of his father Dharmapāla himself, the contemporary and rival of Nāgabhaṭa II Pratihāra, and Dhruva and Govinda III Rāshtrakūṭa, the title Gauḍeśvara becomes the official style of the reigning emperors. Gauḍa is, however, still referred to as a *vishaya* or district as we learn from a Kānheri inscription<sup>7</sup> of Amoghavarsha I (814-877 A.D.). The existence of Vaṅga as a political or adminis-

built the city of Śrāvastī. The evidence probably points to Śrāvastī (Sahet Mahet) in Gonda in Kosala or Oudh, and not to the place of that name in Northern Bengal. It is, however, important to note that the expression Gauḍa-deśa does not occur in the corresponding text of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Vāyu* and *Brahma Purāṇas*. It is thus an obvious interpolation. In the *Kāmasūtra*, the Kosalas, that is to say, the people of the Śrāvastī region, ruled over by early Ikshvāku kings, are clearly distinguished from the Gauḍas (Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, 4th ed., pp. 536-537).

<sup>1</sup> Watters, II. 192, 340; Hunter, ix. 92. Cf. *JASB.* 1853, p. 281; 1893, p. 315; 1908, p. 281. See *infra* p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> xiv. 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> *IA.* 1891, p. 419 f.

<sup>4</sup> *JASB.* 1908, p. 270; for the date of the poet see Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*, p. 225.

<sup>5</sup> Hunter, I. 368.

<sup>6</sup> *EI.* xviii. 108.

<sup>7</sup> *IA.* xiii. 134.

trative unit in the same period is proved by the Nilgund inscription<sup>1</sup> of the same Rāshtrakūṭa monarch. Gauḍa and Vaṅga are sometimes mentioned side by side as in the Baroda Plates of Karkarāja<sup>2</sup>. (811-12 A.D.). But political union under the same sovereign, styled both Vaṅgapati and Gauḍeśvara, was fast making them interchangeable terms. The process was complete in the Mughal and British periods. In a record<sup>3</sup> of the time of Aurangzeb 'Ālamgīr, the *subah* of Bengal, over which Shāyista Khān presided, is referred to as Gauḍa-maṇḍala. In the nineteenth century a Bengali poet hailing from the Jessore district in the heart of old Vaṅga, applies to his own countrymen the designation *Gauḍajana*.

Regarding the connection of Gauḍa with Rāḍhā evidence seems to be discrepant. In the *Prabodha-chandrodaya*<sup>4</sup> of Kṛishṇa Miśra (eleventh or twelfth century A.D.), the Gauḍa-rāshṭra is said to have included Rāḍhā (or Rāḍhāpurī) and Bhūriśreshṭhika, identified with Bhursut on the banks of the Dāmodar in the Hooghly-Howrah districts. But the Managoli inscription<sup>5</sup> of the Yādava king Jaitugi I distinguishes Lāḷa (Rāḍhā) from Gauḷa (Gauḍa).

According to Jaina writers<sup>6</sup> of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Gauḍa included Lakshmaṇāvātī in the present Malda district. If the commentator of the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana is to be believed, it extended southward as far as Kāliṅga.<sup>7</sup> It may be noted in this connection that the *Śaktisaṅgama-tantra*,<sup>8</sup> a late mediaeval work, extends the country from Vaṅga (Central and Eastern Bengal) to Bhuvaneśa (Orissa). The *Rājatarāṅginī*<sup>9</sup> (twelfth century) uses the term in a very extended sense. We find in this work the expression *Pañcha-Gauḍa* which in some texts is taken to embrace, besides Gauḍa proper, the countries known as Sārasvata (Eastern Punjab), Kānyakubja (Gangetic Doab), Mithilā (North Bihar) and Utkala (Northern Orissa).<sup>10</sup> This is reminiscent of the Gauḍa empire of Dharmapāla. But there is no early warrant for the use of the term Gauḍa in this wide sense.

In the early Muslim period the name Gauḍa came to be applied to the city of Lakshmaṇāvātī in the Malda district. It is

<sup>1</sup> *El.* vi. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *IA.* xii. 160.

<sup>3</sup> *ASI.* 1922-23, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> *Act.* II; *IIIQ.* 1928, p. 239; *Bhāratavarsha*, 1938 (B.S.), Śrāvṇa, p. 239.

<sup>5</sup> *El.* v. 29; cf. also *Jyotishatatvam* quoted in *Śabdakalpadruma*, pp. 1159-1160 (under *Rāḍhaka*). The *Digvijaya-prakāśa* places Rāḍha-deśa to the west of Gauḍa (*Vasumati*, 1840, Māgha, p. 610).

<sup>6</sup> *JASB.* 1908, p. 281.

<sup>7</sup> Benares edition, p. 295. The commentator wrote in the thirteenth century (Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, 469).

<sup>8</sup> 'Gauḍa' in the *Śabdakalpadruma*.

<sup>9</sup> *iv.* 468.

<sup>10</sup> *Skanda Purāṇa* quoted in the *Śabdakalpadruma* (under "Gauḍa").

perhaps this Gauḍa which is at times included within Puṇḍra by some authorities of a late date.<sup>1</sup> There was also a Gauḍa in North-Sylhet.<sup>2</sup>

### VANĠA

The earlier references to this famous *janapada* have been noted above. It is mentioned in the Meherauli inscription<sup>3</sup> of Chandra and one of the earliest records of the Chālukyas of Vātāpi.<sup>4</sup> Kālidāsa, the traditional contemporary of Dinnāga (fifth century A.D.), places the Vaṅgas amidst the streams of the Ganges (*Gaṅgā-sroto'ntara*).<sup>5</sup> The western boundary of their country possibly at times extended beyond the Hooghly to the river Kapiśā or Kāsāi in the Midnapore district. The inclusion within Vaṅga of an area beyond the Hooghly is also vouched for by the Jaina Upāṅga styled the *Prajñāpanā*, which mentions Tāmralipti (Tamluk) as a city of the Vaṅgas.<sup>6</sup> The Tamluk territory is, however, usually mentioned in literature as a distinct region.

Vaṅga of Pāla and Sena records seems to have been a smaller tract than the old territory known to the Jaina *Prajñāpanā* and the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa. It could not have extended as far as Tamluk, as the district beyond the Bhāgīrathī, which was once included within its area, now formed part of the Vardhamāna-bhukti. Even a part of the delta embracing Jessore and certain adjoining tracts came to be distinguished as Upavaṅga. This last-mentioned territory is already referred to in the *Bṛihat-saṃhitā* of Varāhamihira.<sup>7</sup> The *Digvijaya-prakāśa*,<sup>8</sup> a mediaeval work assigned to cir. 1600 A.D., places in Upavaṅga Jessore and some other tracts abounding in forest (*Upavaṅge Yaśorādyāḥ deśāḥ kānana-saṃyutāḥ*). Vaṅga proper was now restricted to the eastern part of the Gangetic delta. If the *Abhidhāna-chintāmaṇi*<sup>9</sup> of Hemachandra and the *Jayamaṅgalā*<sup>10</sup> of Yaśodhara are to be believed, it was identified

<sup>1</sup> *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, IA. 1891, p. 419; cf. *Śabdakalpadruma* (quoting the *Trikaṇḍaśeṣa*) under "Varendrī." It is, however, to be noted that the *Purāṇa* places Gauḍa south of the Padmā.

<sup>2</sup> *JASB.* 1873, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Fleet, *CII.* III. 141.

<sup>4</sup> The Mahākūta Pillar inscription. IA. XIX. 7 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Raghuvamśa*, IV. 36.

<sup>6</sup> IA. 1891, p. 375.

<sup>7</sup> XIV. 8. Jaṭhara of the passage has been identified with *Jaṭār Deul* (S. Mitra, *Yaśohar-Khulnār Itihāsa*, 69).

<sup>8</sup> S. Mitra, *op. cit.* 4, 132.

<sup>9</sup> *Bhūmikāṇḍa*, *Vaṅgāstu Harikeliyāḥ*.

<sup>10</sup> *Vaṅgā Lohityāt pūrveṇa* (Benares ed., pp. 294-95). It may be noted in

with or included some territory on the east of the Brahmaputra. Hemachandra actually equates the people of Vaṅga with the inhabitants of Harikelī (Sylhet?).<sup>1</sup>

In the later Pāla period Vaṅga was divided into two parts, northern and southern (*anuttara*). It is to be noted that the sister province of Rāḍhā was also from the ninth or tenth century A.D. divided into two regions styled *Uttara-Rāḍhā* and *Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍhā*.<sup>2</sup> *Anuttara* or southern Vaṅga is distinctly referred to in the Kamauli Grant<sup>3</sup> of Vaidyadeva, a minister of Kumārapāla. The two divisions of Vaṅga implied in Vaidyadeva's Grant may have corresponded roughly to the two *bhāgas* of the same territory mentioned in later Sena inscriptions, namely the *Vikramapura-bhāga* and *Nāvyā*.

Of the two sub-divisions of Vaṅga, the *Vikramapura-bhāga* is well-known. But in the Sena period it seems to have embraced a wider area than the modern *parganā* of Vikrampur in the Dacca Division watered by the Padmā. It seems to have stretched southward as far as the Koṭālipādā and Edilpur *Parganās*.

Nāvyā as a sub-division of Vaṅga is mentioned in the Madhyapādā Plate of Viśvarūpasena.<sup>4</sup> A recent writer regarded Nāvyā-maṇḍala of the Rāmpāl Plate as a mistake for Nāvyā-maṇḍala.<sup>5</sup> He further identified Nehakāshthi in that *maṇḍala* with Naikāthi in the Bākarganj district. The record of Viśvarūpasena includes in the Nāvyā region the Rāmasiddhipāṭaka which has been identified by the writer mentioned above with a village in the Gaurnadi area of Bākarganj. In the east Nāvyā extended to the sea i.e. the head of the Bay and the estuary of the Meghnā.<sup>6</sup>

Nāvyā, which means "accessible by a boat or ship," is a fitting designation of the south-eastern part of the Gangetic delta which is a labyrinth of rivers and creeks. As *Nāvyam* has the sense of *newness*, one is reminded of Navyāvakāśikā (*lit.* new intermediate space or opening) of the Faridpur Grants of the sixth century A.D.<sup>7</sup> The two places may have been connected with each other. But the data at our disposal are too scanty to warrant any definite conclusion regarding the matter.

• this connection that Sonūrgāon, the chief city of Vaṅga during the early Muslim period, is situated about 2 miles inland from the Brahmaputra creek (Hunter, v. 71 and the map in the volume).

<sup>1</sup> EHBP. I. IV.

<sup>2</sup> EI. XXIII. 74, 105.

<sup>3</sup> GL. 140.

<sup>4</sup> IB. 146, 194.

<sup>5</sup> J. Ghosh, *Pañchapushpa*, 1939 (n.s.), Phālguna, p. 363.

<sup>6</sup> IB. 142, 146.

<sup>7</sup> IA. 1910, p. 200; DR. 1920, pp. 42, 87; EI. XVIII. 76





## SAMATĀṬA

This territory finds mention in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta and later records. Its exact limits in the Gupta age are not known. The *Bṛihat-saṃhitā*,<sup>1</sup> a work of the sixth century A.D., distinguishes it from Vaṅga. The narrative in the record of Hiuen Tsang in the next century describes it as a low and a moist country on the sea-side that lay to the south of Kāmarūpa (in Assam). It was more than three thousand *li* i.e. about 500 British miles in circuit and its capital was about twenty *li* i.e. about 3½ miles in circuit. If the identification of Rājabhāṭa, king of Samatāṭa, mentioned by Far Eastern travellers, with Rājarāja-bhaṭṭa of the Ashrafpur Plates be correct, then it is possible that in the seventh century A.D., Samatāṭa had a royal residence at Karmānta.<sup>2</sup> This place has been identified with Baḍkāmtā in the district of Tippera, situated twelve miles west of Comilla. The connection of Samatāṭa with the Tippera district in later ages is clearly established by the Bāghāurā image inscription of the time of Mahipāla, and the Mehār copper-plate of Dāmodaradeva, dated 1234 A.D. Hiuen Tsang's description suggests that in his time it may have included within its political boundaries a part of Central Bengal in addition to Tippera. A descriptive label attached to a picture of Lokanātha in a certain illustrated manuscript places Champitalā in the Tippera district in Samatāṭa.<sup>3</sup>

## HARIKELA

Writers of the seventh century mention, beside the land described above, a country called Harikela. According to I-tsing<sup>4</sup> it was the eastern limit of East India. The evidence of the Chinese writer is confirmed by that of the *Karpūra-maṇḍjarī* (ninth century A.D.) which includes Harikela girls among women of the east :

"Thou gallant of the women of the East, thou *champak*-bloom ear-ornament of the town of Champā, thou whose lustre transcends the loveliness of Rādhā, who hast conquered Kāmarūpa by thy prowess, who providest merry-makings (*keli*) for Harikeli."<sup>5</sup>

In the epigraphic records of the Chandra dynasty of Eastern Bengal, Trailokyachandra, ruler of Chandradvīpa (Bākarganj district), is described as the mainstay of the king of Harikela. The lexicographer Hemachandra identifies Harikeli, apparently the city of

<sup>1</sup> xiv. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> Foucher, *Icon.* 102, pl. iv. 3; *Bhatt. Cat.* 12.

<sup>3</sup> Konow and Lanman's ed. and tr. (*HOS*), pp. 226-27.

<sup>4</sup> See *infra* pp. 86-87.

<sup>5</sup> *I-tsing.* XLVI.



*Harikela*, with *Vaṅga*.<sup>1</sup> It has been recently pointed out by a young writer that the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* mentions *Harikela*, *Vaṅga*, and *Samatata* as distinct entities and that in two manuscripts in the *Dacca University* collection, *Harikola*, that is possibly *Harikela*, is synonymous with *Sylhet*.<sup>2</sup> The evidence of the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* need not, however, be taken to suggest that *Harikela* was dissociated from *Vaṅga* in all ages. The case of *Tāmralipta* suggests that a *janapada* which is mentioned as a separate kingdom by one authority may have formed part of a neighbouring realm in a different epoch.

#### CHANDRADVĪPA

*Chandradvīpa* is mentioned in the *Rāmpāl* copper-plate inscription as the name of the territory ruled over by *Trailokyachandra* (tenth or eleventh century A.D.). The famous *Tārā* image of *Chandradvīpa* is illustrated in a manuscript dated 1015 A.D.<sup>3</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was the name of a small principality in the district of *Bākarganj* of which the capital was at first at *Kachua* and subsequently removed to *Madhavpasa*.<sup>4</sup> It is identified with the *parganā* of *Baglā* (*Bāklā*) in the *sarkar* of the same name mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.<sup>5</sup>

The *Madhyapādā* inscription of *Viśvarūpasena* mentions two interesting place-names. These are "*Bāṅgālabadā*" and "*ndradvīpa*." The last name has been restored by different scholars as *Kandradvīpa*, *Indradvīpa* and *Chandradvīpa*. The reading *Chandradvīpa* is supported by the fact that the territory in question included *Ghāgharakāṭṭī-pāṭaka*. As is well-known, *Ghāghar* is the name of a stream that flowed past *Phullaśrī* in north-west *Bākarganj* in the days of the poet *Vijayagupta* (fifteenth century A.D.). It exists to the present day.

#### VAṅGĀLA

*Bāṅgālabadā*<sup>6</sup> stood to the south of *Rāmasiddhi* mentioned above which has been identified with a place in *Gaurnadi* in the *Bākarganj* district. The name can scarcely be dissociated from *Vaṅgāla-deśa* mentioned in epigraphic and literary records since the eleventh century A.D. It was *Vaṅgāla*, rather than *Vaṅga*, that

<sup>1</sup> See *supra* p. 15, f.n. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Foucher, *Icon.* 135-37; *Bhatt.* Cat. 12 ff.

<sup>3</sup> H. Beveridge. *The District of Bakarganj*, 72 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 70; *Ain.* II. 123, 134.

<sup>5</sup> For *Vadā*=house see *IIIQ.* 1939, p. 140.

<sup>6</sup> *EHBI.* I. iii-iv.

gave its name to the great eastern *subah* of the Mughal empire that stretched from Chittagong to Garhi, and to the great Presidency of British India round Fort William. Abu'l-Fazl apparently regarded Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla as identical. He says :

"The original name of Bengal was *Bang*. Its former rulers raised mounds measuring ten yards in height and twenty in breadth throughout the province which were called *āl*. From this suffix, the name Bengal took its rise and currency."

But Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla are mentioned separately in several inscriptions of South India and the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* of Shams-i-Sirāj 'Aff.<sup>2</sup> Though a Vaṅgāla army advanced as far as Pāhārpur in the Raṅgshahi district in the eleventh century A.D.<sup>3</sup> and the dominions of the Chandra kings of Vaṅgāla embraced, according to tradition,<sup>4</sup> Paṭṭikerā and Mṛikula or Mehārakula in Tippera as well as Rangpur and Chittagong, the home territory of the Vaṅgālas does not seem to have lain in any of these areas. In a book dealing with the Maynāmatī-Gopīchānd legend we have pointed reference to Vaṅgāla *Langobardi* hailing from Bhāṭi: "*Bhāṭi haite āla Vāṅgāla lambā lambā dāḍi*."<sup>5</sup>

Bhāṭi, *lit.* "downstream," "land of the ebb-tide," is the name given to the low-lying flats of the Gangetic delta that border on the great estuaries. Tāranātha refers to "Bati" as an island-realm near the mouth of the Ganges.<sup>6</sup> Abu'l-Fazl confines the Bhāṭi to 'the tract of country on the east' of the *subah* of Bengal.<sup>7</sup> The name is still used to denote the Sundarban region of the districts of Bākarganj and Khulna. The derivation of the name Vaṅgāla (Vaṅga + *āl*, from *ālī*, "dike") supports its identification with the part of old Vaṅga (not the whole as stated by Abu'l-Fazl) intersected by *khāls* and creeks, and abounding in dikes and bridges, that was known as Bhāṭi in the days of Akbar and Tāranātha. It is in this area that Gastaldi (1561 A.D.) places his "Bengala." European writers of the seventeenth century place "Bengala" further to the east. But their evidence, valuable as it is for the contemporaneous period, does not carry the same weight as that of Gastaldi for the earlier ages.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ain*. II. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *EI*. v. 257; *EHBP*. I. v; *E & D*. III. 295.

<sup>3</sup> *EI*. XXI. 98.

<sup>4</sup> *Maynāmatīr Gān* (Dacca Sāhitya Parishad); Hunter, VII. 312; *JASB*. 1898, p. 22. *Bhatt. Cat.* 10-11; *EI*. XVII. 351.

<sup>5</sup> *Mānikchandra Rājār Gān*, 12. *JASB*. 1878, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> *IA*. IV (1875), p. 366.

<sup>7</sup> *Ain*. II. 116.

<sup>8</sup> *JASB*. 1908, p. 292; Raychaudhuri, *SIA*. 189-190; R. Mookerjee, *The Changing Face of Bengal*, Pl. III-IV (List of Maps). For other views and a detailed discussion on Vaṅgāla, cf. *IHQ*. XVI. 225 ff.

## PUNÐRA AND VARENDRĪ

Mention has already been made of the Puṇḍras, a people known to later Vedic texts and the Great Epic. The *Digvijaya* section of the *Mahābhārata* places them to the east of Monghyr and associates them with the prince who ruled on the banks of the Kosi. This accords with the evidence of Gupta epigraphs and the records of the Chinese writers which agree in placing the territory of the Puṇḍras—then styled Puṇḍravardhana—in North Bengal. The distinction drawn by some writers between the Puṇḍras and the Pauṇḍras and the location of the Pauṇḍras to the east of Prayāga and west of Magadha<sup>1</sup> lack corroboration by Gupta epigraphs and is not countenanced by the testimony of Chinese pilgrims.

Varendrī or Varendrī-*maṇḍala* was the metropolitan district of the Puṇḍravardhana territory, as the city of Puṇḍravardhana-*pura*—the Puṇḍra-*nagara* of an old Brāhmī inscription—was situated within its area. The form Varendra (-ī)-*maṇḍala* occurs in the Talcher Grant<sup>2</sup> of Gayādatuṅgadeva and the *Kavi-praśasti* of the *Rāmacharita* of Sandhyākara Nandī. The latter definitely locates it between the Ganges and the Karatoyā. Its inclusion within Puṇḍravardhana is proved by the Silimpur, Tarpandighi and Madhainagar inscriptions. The *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* mentions Bārind as a wing of the territory of Lakhnawati on the eastern side of the Ganges. The evidence of Indian literature and inscriptions proves that it included considerable portions of the present Bogra, Rajshahi and Dinajpur districts. An important part of Varendrī was apparently known as Sāvasthi or Śrāvastī. This territory included Baigram near Hili in the Dinajpur district, Kroḍañja or Kolañcha (in Dinajpur or Bogra) and a place called Tarkārī which was separated from Bālagrāma in Varendrī by Sakaṭī, apparently a river.<sup>3</sup> Among other localities of Varendrī may be mentioned Bhāvagrāma, Belahisṭī, Kāntāpura and Nāṭārī.<sup>4</sup> The first two I am unable to identify. Kāntāpura reminds one of Kāntanagara of the Dinajpur district, while Nāṭārī is undoubtedly Nator in the district of Rajshahi. Varendrī may have also included Paduwanvā which some writers identify with Pabna.<sup>5</sup>

## RĀḍHĀ

• This far-famed territory was, like Vaṅga, divided into two parts viz., Dakṣiṇa- or South Rāḍhā and Uttara- or North Rāḍhā. This

<sup>1</sup> Sastri, *Cat.* iv. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *JASB.* N.S. xii. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *EL.* xiii. 290; *Kām. Śās.* 137, 155 and errata; *ASI.* 1930-34, Part II. 237-58; *IC.* II. 358.

<sup>4</sup> *GL.* 133; *IB.* 100, 108; *IA.* 1891, p. 420.

<sup>5</sup> See *infra* Ch. vi. § 6.

mode of division which can be traced back to the ninth century A.D. apparently replaces the older segmentation of the area into Vajjabhūmi and Subbbabhūmi.

#### DAKSHINA-RĀḌHĀ

This part of Rāḍhā is mentioned in the Gaonri Plates<sup>1</sup> of Vākpati Muñja (981 A.D.). Ten years later it is referred to in the *Nyāyakandalī* of Śrīdharāchārya.<sup>2</sup> It figures in Chōla records of 1023-25 as Takkaṇalāḍam. Among other references may be mentioned those in the Amareśvara Temple inscription<sup>3</sup> of Māndhātā (Nimar district in the Central Provinces), composed by Halāyudha, the *Prabodha-chandrodaya*<sup>4</sup> of Kṛishṇa Mīśra and the *Chandī* of Kavikāṇkana Mukundarāma.<sup>5</sup> According to these records Dakshina-Rāḍhā included Bhūrisṛishṭi or Bhūrisreshṭhika (modern Bhursut) and Navagrāma in the Howrah and Hooghly districts, as well as Dāmuniyā (to the west of the Dāmodar) in the Burdwan district. It is clear from this that the territory in question embraced considerable portions of Western Bengal lying between the Ajay and the Dāmodar rivers. The southern boundary may have reached the Rupnārāyan and the western boundary may have extended beyond the Dāmodar far into the Arambagh sub-division. Tradition, however, recorded in the *Digvijaya-prakāśa*, restricts Rāḍhā to the territory lying north of the Dāmodar (*Dāmodar-ottare bhāge..... Rāḍhadeśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*).<sup>6</sup> Closely connected with Dakshina-Rāḍhā as a territory subject to the same ruling family (Śūra) was Aparā-Mandāra, perhaps identical with Ma(n)dāran in the Arambagh sub-division of Hooghly.

#### UTTARA-RĀḌHĀ-MANḌALA

The northern part of the famous land of Rāḍhā was known as Uttara-Rāḍhā (*Uttiralāḍam* of Chōla inscriptions) at least as early as the time of the Gaṅga king Devendravarman. This fact is known from the Indian Museum Plates<sup>7</sup> of the Gaṅga year 308 which possibly falls in the ninth century A.D. The district is also known from the Belāva and Naihāti Grants. The last mentioned

<sup>1</sup> *El.* xxiii. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *JASB.* 1912, p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> Hiralal, *Inss. in C.P. and Berar* (2nd ed.), p. 72; *IC.* i. 502 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Act.* ii.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. Univ. ed.*, Pt. i. p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> See *supra* p. 10, f.n. 6 and p. 14, f.n. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *El.* xxiii. 74.

record includes it within the *Vardhamāna-bhukti*. But in the time of *Lakshmaṇasena* it formed part of the *Kaṅkagrāma-bhukti*.<sup>1</sup>

Among places mentioned in inscriptions<sup>2</sup> as being situated in *Uttara-Rāḍhā*, *Siddhalagrāma* has been identified with *Siddhan-gram* in the Birbhum district, and *Vāllahitṭhā* with *Bālutiya* on the northern borders of the Burdwan district. The Śaktipur Grant of *Lakshmaṇasena* suggests that the *maṇḍala* of *Uttara-Rāḍhā* also embraced villages in the Kandi sub-division of Murshidabad.

The river Ajay is usually regarded as constituting the boundary line between north and south *Rāḍhā*. But the inclusion of a part of the Katwa sub-division within *Uttara-Rāḍhā* may imply that at times the Khari, rather than the Ajay, separated northern *Rāḍhā* from southern *Rāḍhā*. As to the northern limits of the *Uttara-Rāḍhā-maṇḍala*, it has already been stated above that the *Jaina Prajñāpanā* knows *Koṭivarsha* or *Bāngarh* in the Dinajpur district as a city in *Rāḍhā*. The *Chandraprabhā* of *Bharata Mallika* refers to a part of *Rāḍhā* which lay north of the Ganges (*Uttara-Gaṅga-Rāḍhām*).<sup>3</sup> It is, however, clear from contemporary inscriptions and the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Ganges formed the boundary between "Ral and the city of Lakhan-or" on the one hand, and "Barind and the city of Diw-kot on the other."<sup>4</sup>

#### TĀMRALIPTA (-LIPTI) OR DĀMALIPTA

*Tāmrālipta* is already known to the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Digvijaya* section of the *Sabhāparvan* it is distinguished not only from territories known to have been situated in Northern, Eastern and Central Bengal, but also from *Suhma*. This state of things changed in later ages when *Tāmrālipta* is represented as having formed a part of *Vaṅga* in the time of the *Jaina Prajñāpanā*, and of *Suhma* in the days of *Daṇḍin*, the author of the *Daśakumāra-charita*. The core of the territory lay in the modern Midnapore district and its capital has been identified with *Tamalites* of *Ptolemy*, the modern *Tamluk*. In the days of *Hiuen Tsang* it lay over 900 *li*, that is about 150 miles, from *Samataṭa* and was about 1400 *li* (about 233 miles) in circuit. "The land was low and moist," forming a bay where land and water communication met.

Having surveyed the chief traditional political and geographical divisions of Bengal, we may now refer to the administrative units

<sup>1</sup> *El.* XXI. 218.  
<sup>2</sup> p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *JRAS.* 1935, p. 99; *IB.* 71.  
<sup>4</sup> *Nāsiri*. I. 584-86.

of the province in different periods. Epigraphic records enable us to determine with a tolerable degree of certainty the approximate location of at least the more important divisions, called *bhuktis*. The term *bhukti*, which we first find in the Gupta records, literally means an 'allotment' but was applied to denote the biggest administrative unit within a kingdom or empire.

A *bhukti* was usually divided into smaller areas styled *vishaya*, *maṇḍala* or *vithi*. *Vishaya* and *maṇḍala* are sometimes used as synonymous terms. Khāḍī, which is referred to as a *vishaya* in the Barrackpore Grant, is styled a *maṇḍala* in the Sundarban Plate of Lakshmaṇasena. But a *vishaya* is at times included within a *maṇḍala*. Conversely a *maṇḍala* is at times a sub-division of a *vishaya*. The Khalimpur Plate of Dharmapāla refers to the Mahantāprakāśa-*vishaya* apparently as a part of the Vyāghrataṭi-*maṇḍala*. On the other hand, the Bangarh inscription refers to the Gokalikā-*maṇḍala* as a part of the Koṭivarsha-*vishaya*.

The terms *vishaya* and *maṇḍala* were in rare cases possibly used to denote the same administrative division as *bhukti*. Thus Magadha which is styled a *vishaya* in the colophon of a manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*<sup>1</sup> written in the fifteenth year of Rāmapāla, is styled a *bhukti* in a Nālandā Seal inscription.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, possible that the Magadha-*vishaya* was only a part of the Magadha-*bhukti*. In the Irdā inscription Daṇḍa-*bhukti* is referred to as a *maṇḍala* of the Vardhamāna-*bhukti*. Apparently we have to class *bhuktis* into two groups, namely major *bhuktis* and minor *bhuktis*. The latter were at times equated with *maṇḍalas*.

The denotation of the term *vithi* in the Gupta age is not clear. In later times it appears as a sub-division of the *bhukti* as well as the *maṇḍala*. Other sub-divisions of *maṇḍalas* referred to in epigraphs are *khaṇḍala*, *āvṛitti*, and apparently, *bhāga*. The *āvṛitti* was further sub-divided into *chaturakas* and the latter into *pāṭakas*. The *chaturaka* is mentioned in certain grants as a sub-division of a *maṇḍala*, and the *pāṭaka*, of a *bhāga*. The *pāṭaka* seems to have been the lowest administrative unit. Hemachandra defines it as one-half of a *grāma* or village.

Inscriptions of the Gupta age disclose or imply the existence of three *bhuktis* in the area now known as Bengal viz., Puṇḍra-*vardhana*, Vardhamāna, and an unnamed *bhukti* which included Suvarṇa-*vithi* and Navyāvakaśikā. The first two of these along with five others viz., Tira-*bhukti*, Śrīnagara-*bhukti*, Kaṅkagrāma-*bhukti*, Daṇḍa-*bhukti* and Prāgyotisha-*bhukti* are known from the

<sup>1</sup> *BL. 260; PB. 93.*

<sup>2</sup> *ASI. 1927-28, p. 139.*

Pāla and Sena records to have formed parts of the Gauda empire. Of these *Tira-bhukti* (Tirhut in North Bihar), *Śrinagara-bhukti* or *Magadha-bhukti* (in South Bihar), and *Prāgjyotiṣa-bhukti* (in Assam) in the main lay beyond the limits of Bengal proper. An old *bhukti* was sometimes incorporated with a neighbouring division, and a new *bhukti* carved out of an older one. In the Irda record of the tenth century A.D., *Daṇḍa-bhukti* forms part of the *Vardhamāna-bhukti*. In the time of Lakshmaṇasena the northern part of the *Vardhamāna-bhukti*, together perhaps with some adjacent tracts, was constituted into a separate administrative division styled *Kaṅkagrāma-bhukti*.

We now proceed to give a brief account of the *bhuktis* included within Bengal proper with the sub-divisions or smaller units into which they were split up for administrative purposes.

#### I. PUṆDRAVARDHANA-BHUKTI

It is mentioned in Gupta epigraphs ranging from the years 124 to 224 that is from 444 to 544 A.D. In the records of the Pāla-Sena age it is variously styled Puṇḍra- or Paṇḍra-varḍhana or simply Paṇḍra-*bhukti*. It seems to have been the biggest administrative division or province of the Gauda empire. It extended from the summit of the Himālayas (*Himavach-chhikhara* of a Damodarpur Plate) in the north to Khāḍī in the Sundarban region in the south. The Bhāgīrathī (Jāhnavī) separated it from the *Vardhamāna-bhukti* in the west. The *Madhyapādā* Plate of Viśvarūpasena extends its eastern boundary to the sea, apparently the Bay of Bengal and the estuary of the Meghnā. According to the Mehar copper-plate, dated 1234 A.D., it comprised even a part of the district of Tippera.

The *bhukti* was divided into several *vishayas* and *maṇḍalas* of which twenty-four find mention in known epigraphs. These were :

- 1-2. *Vyāghrataṭi-Maṇḍala* to which was attached the *Mahantāprakāśa-Vishaya*.
- 3-5. *Sthālikkaṭa-Vishaya* to which was attached the *Āmra-shaṇḍikā-Maṇḍala* near the *Uḍragrāma-Maṇḍala*.
6. *Kuddālakṣhāta-Vishaya*.
- 7-9. *Koṭivarṣa-Vishaya* in which were included the *Gokalikā* and *Halāvarta-Maṇḍalas*.
10. *Brāhmaṇigrāma-Maṇḍala*.
11. *Nānya-Maṇḍala*.
- 12-13. *Khediravalli-Vishaya* which included the *Vallimūḍā-Maṇḍala*.

- 14-15. 'Ikkaḍāsī-Vishaya which included the Yolā-Maṇḍala.  
 16-17. Satatāpadmāvāṭī-Vishaya in which was included the Kumāratālaka-Maṇḍala.  
 18. Pañchavāsa-Maṇḍala.  
 19. Adhaḥpattana-Maṇḍala.  
 20. Khāḍī-Vishaya or -Maṇḍala.  
 21. Varendra- or Varendrī-Maṇḍala.  
 22. Vaṅga which included the Vikramapura-Bhāga and Nāvya.  
 23-24. Samatāṭa-Maṇḍala which included the Paraṇāyī-Vishaya.

Nos. 1-6, 8-15, 17-18 and 24 do not admit of precise identification and Nos. 21-23 have been dealt with above. The theory that equates the Vyāghrataṭī-maṇḍala with Bāgḍī is not based upon any convincing evidence. No. 7, Koṭīvarsha-vishaya, is already mentioned in Gupta inscriptions. The city from which it derives its name is referred to in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*. The Jaina *Prajñāpanā* places it in Rāḍhā (Lāḍha). Buṭ Gupta and Pāla inscriptions invariably include it within the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. The head-quarters of the *vishaya* have been identified with the mediaeval Diw-kot (Devakoṭa or Devikoṭa). The ruins of the city are found about eighteen miles south of Dinajpur town in the village of Bāngarh. Several names of the famous city are mentioned by lexicographers e.g. Umā (Ushā-?) vana, Bānapura and Sonitapura.

No. 16 was apparently situated on the banks of the river Padmā. The name of the *vishaya* is important as furnishing evidence of the early use of the name Padmā for the main eastern branch of the Ganges.

The Adhaḥpattana-maṇḍala included the Kauśāmbī-Ashtagachchha-khaṇḍala. This Kauśāmbī has been identified by some writers with Kusumba in the Rajshahi district. Hunter apparently refers to it as Kusumbi *tappā* (fiscal division).<sup>1</sup>

Khāḍī, *lit.* estuary, is referred to as a *vishaya* in the Barrackpore Grant of Vijayasena and as a *maṇḍala* in the Sundarban Grant of Lakshmanasena. It is known to the *Dākārṇava*<sup>2</sup> as one of the sixty-four *pīṭhas* or sacred seats and is distinguished from Rāḍhā (West Bengal), Vaṅgāla (which includes the south-eastern part of deltaic Bengal), and Harikela (easternmost part of Bengal). The name survives in the Khāḍī *parganā* of the Diamond Harbour sub-division of the district of Twenty-Four Parganas. Land in this area was, in the days of Vijayasena, measured according to the *nala* (reed) standard adopted in Samatāṭa. This has been taken to

<sup>1</sup> Hunter, viii. 120.

<sup>2</sup> IB. 60-61.



indicate that Khādī was included within the Samatāṭa country. But this is not a necessary inference. The services of land-measurers from Samatāṭa may have been requisitioned by the Sena kings in the area under review as those of Samatāṭa engravers were utilised by Nārāyaṇapāla and Gopāla II in a preceding age.

Khādī or Khāṭikā was split up into two parts by the Ganges. The eastern part, Pūrva-khāṭikā or Khādī proper, was included within the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. But Pāśchima-khāṭikā which lay to the west of the Bhāgīrathī in the present Howrah district was a sub-division of the Vardhamāna-bhukti.

## II. SUVARNAVĪTHI-NAVYĀVAKĀŚIKĀ

In the Gupta age Vaṅga does not seem to have formed part of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti but constituted the domain of a separate *Uparika* or governor who was probably stationed at Navyāvakāśikā. The official designation of the province in question is, however, not definitely known to us. One part of it, where stood the provincial head-quarters, is apparently referred to as Suvarnavīthi in the Ghugrāhāṭi copper-plate inscription of Samāchāradeva.<sup>1</sup> The *Uparika* in charge of Suvarnavīthi was the immediate superior of the *Vishayapati* (district officer) of Vāraka-maṇḍala. The district of Vāraka extended as far as the eastern sea (*prāk samudra*), apparently the head of the Bay of Bengal together with the estuary of the Meghnā and included Dhruvilāṭi, identified with Dhulāt near Faridpur town.

It has been suggested that Navyāvakāśikā is to be identified with the ruins at Sabhar in the Dacca district.<sup>2</sup> But Suvarnavīthi which apparently included Navyāvakāśikā reminds one of Suvarṇa-grāma (Sonārgāon), and not Sabhar. It has, however, to be admitted that there is no dated reference to Sonārgāon before the thirteenth century A.D.<sup>3</sup>

## III. VARDHAMĀNA-BHUKTI

It is mentioned in the Mallasarul Plate of the sixth century A.D., the Irda Grant of the tenth century, and the Naihāti and Govindapur

<sup>1</sup> *EL.* xviii. 74 ff. Dr. R. G. Basak holds that Suvarnavīthi was the name of the headquarters and Navyāvakāśikā, that of the province (*HNI.* 192). But the use of the term *vīthi* as an administrative area, as noted above and below, does not support this view.

<sup>2</sup> *EL.* xviii. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Suvarṇa-vīthi may have reference to the entire area in the south-eastern part of the Dacca district which includes, besides Suvarṇa-grāma, such places as Sonākāndi and Sonārang (*vide* map in Hunter, v).

Grants of the twelfth century. It embraced the valley of the Damodar river and is known to have included the Uttara-Rāḍhā and Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍalas. At times it stretched from the river Mor in the north to the Suvarṇarekhā in the south. It is doubtful if it covered an equally extensive area as early as the sixth century A.D. Varāhamihira distinguishes it not only from Tāmraliptika (in Midnapore), but also from Gauḍaka (possibly corresponding to Murshidabad and parts of Burdwan, Birbhum and Malda districts).

Towards the east, the *bhukti* extended as far as the western branch of the Ganges, now known as the Hooghly. In the tenth century the southern boundary extended to the lower reaches of the Suvarṇarekhā. About the middle of the twelfth century the northern boundary is known to have extended beyond the river Ajay so as to embrace within its limits the village of Vāllahitṭhā situated in the Uttara-Rāḍhā-maṇḍala. In the time of Lakshmaṇasena (last quarter of the twelfth century) Uttara-Rāḍhā formed part of the Kaṅkagrāma-bhukti.

The main sub-divisions of the Vardhamāna-bhukti as may be determined from known inscriptions of the Pāla-Sena period are as follows :—

- (1) Daṇḍa-Bhukti-Maṇḍala.
- (2) Paśchima-Khāṭikā.
- (3) Dakṣhiṇa-Rāḍhā.
- (4) Uttara-Rāḍhā-Maṇḍala.

The last two sub-divisions have been noticed above. Dakṣhiṇa-Rāḍhā is not expressly included within the Vardhamāna-bhukti in any official record of the period. But its inclusion is implied by the well-known fact that in the sixth century A.D. the Vardhamāna-bhukti embraced the valley of the Damodar and from the tenth to about the middle of the twelfth century the *bhukti* extended from the valley of the Ajay in the north to that of the Suvarṇarekhā in the south.

The Daṇḍa-Bhukti-Maṇḍala is referred to in the Irdā inscription and also in the *Rāmācharita* of Sandhyākara. It is doubtless identical with Tandabutti, "in whose gardens bees abounded," referred to in Chola inscriptions of 1023-25 A.D. Daṇḍa-Bhukti has been identified by scholars with the marchland between Orissa and Bengal corresponding to the southern and south-western part of the Midnapore district. The name is said to survive in modern Dāntan not far from the river Suvarṇarekhā.

Paśchima-khāṭikā is known from the Govindapur Plate of Lakshmaṇasena. It is apparently distinguished from Pūrva-khāṭikā which is referred to in the Sundarban Plate of Śrīmaḍommaṇapāla, dated 1196 A.D. The river Ganges (Hooghly) doubtless formed

the boundary line between the two parts of Khāṭikā or Khāḍī. As already stated above, Khāḍī was a well-known *vishaya* in the early Sena period. Its eastern part was included in the Puṇḍravardhana-*bhukti*.

Paśchima-khāṭikā included Betaḍḍa-*chaturaka* which has been identified with Betaḍ in the Howrah district.<sup>1</sup> The sub-division may have been carved out of Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍhā.

#### IV. KĀṆKAGRĀMA-BHUKTI

It has been stated above that in the days of Lakṣmaṇasena northern Rāḍhā was attached to the Kāṅkagrāma-*bhukti*. The place Kāṅkagrāma, from which the *bhukti* derives its name, is identified by one writer with Kāṅkjol near Rājmaḥal.<sup>2</sup> Other writers recognise in Kāṅkagrāma the village Kagram in the Bharatpur *thana* of the Murshidabad district.<sup>3</sup> The only facts that may be regarded as beyond dispute are that the new *bhukti* embraced considerable portions of the valley of the Mor river. It doubtless included parts of the Birbhum and Murshidabad districts. It is difficult to say how far it extended in the direction of the present Santal Parganas and the ancient territory of Audumbarika or Audambar mentioned in the Vappaghoshavāṭa inscription and the *Ain-i-Albārī*. The *sarkar* of Audambar stretched from the southern boundary of Purnea to Murshidabad and Birbhum. It included Akmaḥal (modern Rājmaḥal) and may have embraced 'Ka-chu-wen-ki-lo' (Kajāṅgala-*maṇḍala*) mentioned by Hiuen Tsang and Sandhyākara. In the time of Jayanāga of the Vappaghoshavāṭa inscription, the Audumbarika-*vishaya* apparently formed part of the realm of Kārṇasuvarṇa. It is possible that the new *bhukti* of Kāṅkagrāma represents the old kingdom of Gauḍa-Kārṇasuvarṇa mentioned by Varāhamihira, Bāṇa and Hiuen Tsang.

The Kāṅkagrāma-*bhukti* included a number of administrative areas styled *vīthi*. In the Vardhamāna-*bhukti*, the *maṇḍala* came between the *bhukti* and the *vīthi*. But the new *bhukti* seems to have been split up directly into *vīthis*. Like many of the older territories of Bengal, Kāṅkagrāma had a northern and a southern sub-division. The southern part (*Dakṣiṇa-vīthi*) embraced Uttara-Rāḍhā or at least that portion of it which was watered by the river Mor.

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless identical with "Buttor" of Fredericke (Hunter, III. 309).

<sup>2</sup> *El.* XXI. 214.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Pañchapushpa*, 1839 (B.S.), Phālguna, p. 670 with *Hand-Gazetteer of India*, 56.

## THE TRANS-MEGHNA TRACTS

The division of the Trans-Meghnā area into *maṇḍalas*, *viśayas*, and *khaṇḍas* is hinted at in inscriptions discovered in Tippera and Chittagong. The Gunaighar Grant of Vainyagupta of the year 188 (508 A.D.) refers to a district styled Uttara-*maṇḍala* which must have answered to a part of Tippera. The Harikela-*maṇḍala* finds mention in the Chittagong Plate of Kāntideva. The Samataṭa-*maṇḍala* including the Paraṇāyi-*viśaya* is mentioned in the Mehar copper-plate of Dāmodara. The Tippera Grant<sup>1</sup> of Lokanātha of the year x44 (possibly 7th or 8th century A.D.) refers to the Suvvūṅga-*viśaya* which included a forest sub-division (*aṭavi-khaṇḍa*). A place styled Veja-*khaṇḍa* figures in the Maynāmati copper-plate grant of Raṇavāṅkamalla Harikāla-deva.

We may conclude this account with a reference to the chief cities of ancient Bengal.

## CITIES OF ANCIENT BENGAL

As early as Pāṇini we find mention of a city called Gauḍapura. But it cannot be identified. An old Brāhmī inscription refers to the city of Puṇḍranagara which answers to the modern Mahāsthānagarh, an ancient shrine and fort seven miles north of Bogra on the river Karatoyā. Under the name of Puñjavadhana it seems to be mentioned in a Sāñchi *Stūpa* inscription. The city was still flourishing in the days of Hiuen Tsang (seventh century A.D.), and Sandhyākara Nandī (twelfth century A.D.). It formed the headquarters of a *bhukti* till the Muslim conquest.

The famous port of Tāmralipti may be older even than the capital city of the Puṇḍras. It is mentioned in the Great Epic. But the earliest dated reference to it is that contained in the *Geography* of Ptolemy (about the middle of the second century A.D.). The Greek geographer refers to the city as Tamalites and places it on the Ganges in a way which suggests connection with the country of the Mandalai. The town of Tamluk, to which it is taken to correspond, is on the right bank of the river Rupnārāyan about twelve miles from its junction with the Hooghly. As pointed out above, the courses of these rivers have shifted frequently, and it is possible that in early times the port of Tāmralipti may have been situated on the Sarasvatī or another branch of the Ganges. In the days of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hien, Hiuen Tsang, and I-tsing, and of Daṇḍin, the author of the *Daśakumāra-charita*, it was the

<sup>1</sup> *El. xv. 303 ff; HNL. 195; Cf. also infra p. 88.*

place for embarkation for Ceylon, Java and China (in the east), and the land of the Yavanas (in the west). The *Kathāsaritsāgara* preserves traditions about people embarking on ships at Tāmralipti and going to Kaṭāha, possibly in the Malay Peninsula. The decline of the famous port commenced probably after the Dudhpāni (Hazaribagh) Rock inscription of Udayamāna (about the eighth century A.D.). The *Abhidhāna-chintāmaṇi* mentions Dāmalipta, Tāmalipta, Tamālīnī, Stambapura and Viṣṇugriha as synonyms of Tāmralipti. The *Trikāṇḍaśeṣha* adds Velākūla and Tamālīkā (Tamluk).

Along with Tamalites, Ptolemy mentions the royal city of Gange which is already known to the author of the *Periplus* (first century A.D.):

“Through this place are brought malabathrum and Gangetic spikenard and pearls, and muslins of the finest sorts which are called Gangetic.”

The “market-town,” as it is called in the *Periplus*, stood on the banks of the Ganges. But its exact situation is not known. Nor do we know the site of Vaṅganagara<sup>1</sup> referred to in the Ceylonese chronicles in connection with the story of Prince Vijaya. In the same story figures a city styled Simhapura which is placed in Lāla (probably Rādhā) and is taken to correspond with Singur in the Serampore sub-division of Hooghly.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a theory which places the city in Kāthiāwār.<sup>2</sup>

The Susunia inscription of the fourth century A.D. refers to a place called Pushkaraṇa which has been identified with Pokharnā on the south bank of the Dāmodar in the Bankura district. To its famous ruler Chandravarman has been ascribed the foundation of Chandravarma-koṭa mentioned in a Faridpur Grant. This stronghold is said to be represented by the fort at Koṭālipāḍā in the district of Faridpur. From the days of Kumāragupta I (fifth century A.D.) emerges another notable place, Koṭīvarsha, to which reference has already been made above (see *supra* p. 25).

The Baigram inscription of 448 A.D. refers to the head-quarters of a district officer at Pañchanagarī. The identity of the place is uncertain. It may have been situated in the Dinajpur district.

Another important site in North Bengal, whose antiquity can be traced back to the fifth century A.D., is Pāhārpur in the Rajshahi district which was known as Somapura in the days of Dharmapāla and his successors. It was burnt by a Vaṅgāla army in the eleventh century A.D.

In the sixth century A.D. Vardhamāna (Burdwan) and Navyāvākāśikā (possibly in the Dacca district) as well as Puṇḍra-

<sup>1</sup> JASB. 1910, p. 604.

<sup>2</sup> CHI. I. 608.

vardhana appear to have been seats of provincial governors or divisional commissioners styled *Uparika*. The grant of Vainyagupta refers to a royal residence styled *Kṛipura* and the naval port of *Chūḍāmaṇi* whose location is uncertain. *Kṛipura* reminds one of *Nripura* of the *Nālandā Plate* of *Samudragupta*.

In the seventh century *Karṇasuvarṇa* (possibly in the *Murshidabad district*) ranked with *Puṇḍravardhana*, *Tāmrālipti* and the unnamed capital of *Samatāṭa* as one of the premier cities of *Bengal*. It was the royal seat of *Śaśāṅka* and of *Jayanāga* and was occupied for a time by *Bhāskaravarman* of *Assam*. Close to the city was a magnificent monastery styled *Rattamattikā* or *Red Clay* which is taken to answer to *Rungamutty* (*Rāṅgāmāṭi*) on the western branch of the *Ganges*, near *Berhampore* in the *Murshidabad district*.

The *Ashrafpur Plates* refer to *Jayakarmānta-vāsaka* as a seat of the *Khaḍga* kings who possibly ruled over *Samatāṭa*. The place has been identified with *Baḍkāmtā* near *Comilla*.

Curiously enough the records of the earliest *Pāla* kings do not afford any clue as to the location of their metropolis. We have only reference to a few camps of victory mostly in the neighbouring province of *Bihar*.<sup>1</sup> In the time of *Dharmapāla*, who is referred to as *Vaṅgapati* in a *Pratihāra* record, the ancestral capital may have been in *Eastern Bengal*. But from the time of *Devapāla*, who is styled *Gauḍeśvara* in the *Bādāl Pillar* inscriptions, *Gauḍa* seems to have been the metropolitan *vishaya*. The *Anargha-rāghava* of *Murāri*, who probably flourished in the latter part of the eighth century A.D., refers to *Champā* as the capital of *Gauḍa*. The connection of *Champā* with a "Pāla" king of *Gauḍa* has been inferred from the *Jaynagar Image* inscription attributed to "Palapāla," but the reading of the name and of his epithet "Lord of *Gauḍa*" is extremely doubtful. *Champā* in *Gauḍa* may have been identical with *Champā-nagarī* in the *sarkar* of *Madāran* mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. It may, however, also refer to the famous city of that name that stood near modern *Bhāgalpur*.

The *Chittagong Plates* of *Kāntideva* of *Harikela-maṇḍala* (assigned to the ninth century A.D.) mention a royal residence at *Vardhamānapura*. If this city stood in *Harikela* it must be distinguished from *Burdwan* in *West Bengal*.<sup>2</sup> Its precise location can not be determined in the absence of fuller evidence.

<sup>1</sup> *Pāṭaliputra* and *Kapila* in the records of *Dharmapāla* (*Pāla Ins.*, *infra* Ch. vi, App. i, Nos. 2, 3) and *Mudagiri* in the records of *Devapāla* and *Nārāyaṇapāla* (Nos. 6, 14).

<sup>2</sup> This point has been further discussed in Ch. vi *infra*. § iii.

Epigraphic records of the time of Gopāla II, Mahāpāla I, and Vīgrahapāla III refer to royal encampments at Vāṭaparvatikā, Vilāsapura and possibly Haradhāma.<sup>1</sup> The last two *skandhāvāras* were situated on the Ganges, as the royal donors bathed in the sacred stream before issuing the grants, mentioned in the records, from those places. Haradhāma, the "abode of Hara" or Śiva, reminds one of the city of *Chandrārdhamauli*, that is Śiva, in the Suhma country, mentioned by Dhoyī in the *Pavanadūta*. But the identity in meaning of the names of the two places may be accidental.

Rāmāpāla, the youngest son of Vīgrahapāla III, gave his name to the city of Rāmāvatī mentioned in the Manahali record of Madanapāla and the *Rāmācharita* of Sandhyākara. There should be no hesitation in recognising in this city the Rāmāuti of the *Ain-i-Akbari*. The Senas removed the royal seat to the neighbouring city which became famous in the early Muslim period as Lakshnauti (Lakshmaṇāvatī) or Gaur (Gauḍa).<sup>2</sup> This famous capital stood on the banks of the Ganges close to its junction with the Mahānandā about twenty-five miles below Rājmaḥal. The Ganges has now changed its course and the ruins of the famous metropolis of mediaeval Bengal, which stretched no less than fifteen miles along its old bank, no longer touch the sacred stream at any point. Though it had to reckon with a rival in Pandua, Gaur retained its importance till the days of Humāyūn and Akbar. The great Mughals styled it Jannatabad. Owing to its unhealthy climate the city is said to have been abandoned, at least temporarily, after 1576 A.D. The capital was removed to Tanda and finally to Rājmaḥal.<sup>3</sup>

Among the less known dynasties that ruled contemporaneously with the Pālas in the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D., the Kāmbhojas of Daṇḍabhukti had their capital at Priyaṅgu. The identity of the place is not known. The Chandra and Varman families issue grants from the camp of victory at Vikramapura and are associated with the cities of Rohitāgiri, Paṭṭikerā, Mehārakula (or Mṛikula) and Sindhapura. The identification of these cities has been discussed in chapters dealing with their political history.<sup>4</sup>

The official capital (*rājadhāni*) of the Sena kings was, according to the testimony of Dhoyī, at Vijayapura. This city stood on the banks of the Ganges in or near the world-sanctifying country

<sup>1</sup> *Pāla Ins., op. cit.*, Nos. 23, 31, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, 55; Hunter, VII. 23, 51 ff; Khan Sahib M. Abid Ali Khan, *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. B. Hamilton expressed the view that "the city went to ruin not from any great or uncommon calamity; but merely from the removal of the seat of Government" (by Suja). Hunter, VII. 53.

<sup>4</sup> See *infra* Chs. VII and IX.

(*deśam jagati pāvanam*) where the Jumna (*Tapana-tanayā*) starts off from the Bhāgīrathī. This undoubtedly points to the region of Trivenī in the northern part of the Hooghly district. The manuscript of the *Pavanadūta* of Dhoyī styles this territory Brahma which one editor emends to Suhma. Mr. P. C. Sen,<sup>1</sup> however, believes in the existence of a Brahma country and finds his theory supported by the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* which mentions Brahmottara<sup>2</sup> along with Suhma. The theory seems plausible enough. But it cannot be said to be definitely established until fuller evidence, epigraphic or literary, is forthcoming.

Trivenī is styled Muktaveni ('with the braids separated') to distinguish it from Prayāga or Allahabad which is known as Yukta-veni ('joint-braided'). The place is so-called from the fact, noted above, that the Bhāgīrathī, the Sarasvatī and the Jumna branch out at this point. Trivenī retained its fame in the early Muslim period and is still one of the most sacred spots in Bengal. Within two miles from it stood Saptagrāma, the mediaeval capital of South-western Bengal. The famous city is now represented by Sāt-gāon, a small village on the left bank of the Sarasvatī about four miles north of Hooghly.

The narrative of Dhoyī makes it likely that Vijayapura did not lie so far north of Trivenī as Nadiyā which was the seat of 'Rae Lakhmanīah' at the time of the Khilji raid. It cannot be identified with Vijayanagara in Rajshahi. The wind-messenger of Dhoyī is not represented as crossing the Ganges at any point, or moving forward to another *deśa* far away from the sacred region where the Jumna comes out of the Ganges. It is, however, probable that the Senas, from the time of Lakshmaṇasena, had a secondary capital at Lakshmaṇāvati near the Pāla city of Rāmāvati. A third centre of Sena power was Vikramapura in the Dacca district of Eastern Bengal. The importance of this city dates back to the days of the Chandras and the Varmans. It continued to flourish till the time of Arirāja Danujamādhava, the illustrious Daśarathadeva, of the Deva family. The latter seems to have transferred his capital before 1280 A.D. to Suvarṇagrāma,<sup>3</sup> modern Sonārgāon in the eastern part of the Dacca district between the Lakhmiyā and Meghnā rivers. At about the same period Sāt-gāon replaced Vijayapura as the metropolis of South-western Bengal. Chāṭigrāma, the headquarters station of the Chittagong district and Division, does not appear to be mentioned in classical Sanskrit literature or inscrip-

<sup>1</sup> *IHQ*, 1932, pp. 524 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Barmhatter in *Ain*, ii. 141.

<sup>3</sup> It may be that Sonārgāon itself was regarded as a part of the Vikramapura-*bhāga* in those days. See also *infra* Ch. ix. § 1.



tions of an early date. But if Tibetan tradition is to be believed, it was the birthplace of the Buddhist Tāntrik sage Tīla-yogī who flourished in the tenth century A.D. The city was famous for its large Buddhist monastery styled Paṇḍita-vihāra where Buddhist scholars used to hold learned disputations with adherents of rival sects.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For further reference to Chittagong in Tibetan chronicles, cf. *IHQ.* xvi. 228; *JASB.* 1898, p. 23.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LEGENDARY PERIOD

"THE vision of the historian," says Vincent Smith, "can not pass the line which separates the dated from the undated." In the case of Bengal, dated history begins only from 326 B.C., with the famous stand made by the warriors of the Gangaridai and the Prasioi to resist the threatening onslaught of Alexander who had advanced to the Hyphasis and was eager to penetrate deeper into the interior of India.

There was probably some kind of organised social and political life in Bengal many centuries before that notable event, but we do not possess any detailed information about it. The little that we know of the earliest period is derived almost solely from a study of the Vedic literature. We cannot but attach due significance to the absence of all references to Bengal in the *Ṛik-saṃhitā* and in later Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, barring a few casual notices in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, and possibly the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, all of which reveal an attitude towards the country and its people which is not one of approbation (See *supra* pp. 7-8).

We may, therefore, legitimately draw the inference that the primitive peoples of Bengal were different in race or culture, and perhaps in both, from the Aryans who compiled the Vedic literature. We may further hold that Bengal was unknown or but little known to the Vedic Aryans during the period represented by the *Ṛik-saṃhitā*, but that at the time of the later Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas they were gradually coming into contact with the province and adjoining tracts, though this region was still outside the pale of Vedic civilisation. These inferences are fully supported by the famous story of Māthava the Videgha in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.

An interesting sidelight is thrown on the orthodox Aryan view of the origin and characteristics of the early people of Bengal by the Śunaḥśepa episode of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>1</sup> The Rishi Viśvāmitra adopted as his son a Brāhmaṇa boy who had been offered as a victim in a sacrifice to appease a deity. Fifty elder sons of the sage expressed disapproval of the act and were consequently cursed by their father. "Your offspring," said the offended parent, "shall inherit the ends of the earth."<sup>2</sup> They came to be

<sup>1</sup> vii. 13-18.

<sup>2</sup> M. Haug translates the passage as follows: "You shall have the lowest castes for your descendants."

known as the Andhras, Puṇḍras, Śabaras, Pulindas, and Mūtibas who lived in large numbers beyond the borders of Aryandom, and ranked as *dasyus* or outlandish barbarians. An echo of this legend is found in the thirteenth book of the *Mahābhārata*.

A different account of the origin of the Puṇḍras, and some cognate tribes including the Vaṅgas and the Suhmas, is given in the first book of the Great Epic<sup>1</sup>: A blind old sage drifted along the Ganges on a raft, and passed through many countries, till he was picked up by a king named Bali. The childless monarch implored him to raise up offspring on his wife. He did so, and in course of time the queen gave birth to five sons, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kāliṅga, Puṇḍra, and Suhma. They gave their names to five countries, which together roughly correspond to the modern provinces of Bengal and Orissa, with the district of Bhagalpur in Bihar.

In spite of stories about the infusion of the blood of *Rishis* from upper India, it is evident that even in later Brahmanical literature the primitive tribes of Bengal were regarded as *dasyus* and transgressors by the sages. The *Mahābhārata* peoples the Bengal sea-coast with *Mlechchhas*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (II. 4. 18) classes the Suhmas as a sinful (*pāpa*) tribe along with the Kirātas, Hūnas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pukkasas, Ābhīras, Yavanas, and Khasas, while the *Dharmasūtra* of Bodhāyana prescribes expiatory rites after a sojourn amongst the Puṇḍras and the Vaṅgas.

The wild character of the people of Bengal is also emphasised by early Jaina tradition. It is stated in the *Āchārāṅga-sūtra*<sup>2</sup> that when Mahāvīra travelled in the "pathless country" of the Lāḍhas, in "Vajjabhūmi" and "Subbhabhūmi," many natives attacked him, and dogs ran at him. Few people kept off the attacking beasts. Striking the monk they cried "*chu chchhu*," and made the dogs bite him. Many other mendicants had to eat rough food in Vajjabhūmi. They carried about a strong pole or a stalk to keep off the dogs. The Jaina writer laments that it was difficult to travel in Lāḍha (Rāḍhā) i.e. in Western Bengal.

The literary evidence bearing upon the non-Aryan character of the original people of Bengal is supported by linguistic considerations. From an examination of certain tribal names constituting almost identical pairs or triads, differentiated between themselves only by the nature of their initial consonants, Sylvain Lévi<sup>3</sup> draws the conclusion that the primitive peoples of Bengal and some

<sup>1</sup> The account is also found in the Purāṇas; Cf. *Matsya*, Ch. 48. vv. 77 ff; *Vāyū*, Ch. 99. 11. 85 ff.

<sup>2</sup> I. 8. 3; *S.B.E.* XXII (Jaina-sūtras, Part 1), p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India* (trans. by P. C. Bagchi), pp. 124-125.

neighbouring provinces spoke a language that was neither Aryan nor Dravidian, but belonged to a separate family of speech. Other scholars<sup>1</sup> suspect a strong Polynesian influence on the pre-Dravidian population of the southern coast of India. Keith<sup>2</sup> considers much of the evidence adduced by Lévi as of dubious value. It is, however, interesting to note that a Bengal tribe (the Gaudas) and a royal family (the Pālas) in historic ages were considered to have an oceanic connection.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever may have been the ethnic association of the primitive inhabitants of Bengal, it was not long before Aryan influence began to spread in their land. While early *Dharmasūtras* and grammatical treatises confine the land of the Aryans to the upper Ganges valley, the author of the *Mānava Dharmasūtra* extends it from the western to the eastern sea. It should, however, be noted that the law-giver brands the Paṇḍras as *degraded* Kshatriyas, and classes them with Dravidians, Scythians, Chinese, and other outlandish peoples. The *Sabhāparvan* (52. 17) of the *Mahābhārata*, on the contrary, refers to the Vaṅgas and the Puṇḍras as well-born Kshatriyas. The testimony of the epic accords with that of the Jaina *Prajñāpanā* which includes the Vaṅgas and Lāḍhas in the list of Aryan peoples, while Dravidians rank as *mūlikkhas* or *mlechchhas* (barbarians).

By the time when the *Tīrtha-yātrā* section of the Great Epic was composed, the valley of the Karatoyā as well as the lower reaches of the Ganges, where the great river runs into the sea, became recognised as sacred spots. The sanctity of the lower Ganges is also implied in the famous story of king Bhagiratha.

About the political history of the ancient peoples of Bengal, Vedic literature gives no details save that it was peopled by a number of tribes as mentioned above. No Bengal king figures in the hymns or even in the Vedic texts on ritual and philosophy, as does Sudās, hero of the Tṛitsus, Janamejaya, sovereign of the Kurus, or Janaka, the philosopher-king of the Videhas.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. James Hornell, *MASB.* VII. No. 3, 1920, quoted in Lévi's work (*ibid.* 124).

<sup>2</sup> *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads*, II. 632 f.

<sup>3</sup> '*Samudrātraya*,' an expression used in the Haraha inscription in reference to the Gaudas, has been taken to mean "living on the sea-shore" (*EI.* XIV. 120) and taking "shelter towards the sea-shore" (*HNI.* 111). But *Samudra* may not refer to the sea-shore. The passage in question implies that the Gaudas were considered to have had a place of refuge in the sea itself, perhaps in an island, and not merely in the *velā*, *anūpa* or *kachchha*. This is possible if they were themselves a maritime people, or at least had intimate connection with peoples beyond the seas. Communication between West Bengal and Malayasia was easy in the Gupta Age. Regarding the oceanic connection of the Pālas, cf. the commentary on Sandhyākara's *Rāmācharita*, I. 4.

The epics of the middle country and the chronicles of Ceylon furnish some detailed information regarding the legendary kings of old. The epic poets knew Bengal as a country that was usually split up into groups of petty states nine of which are specifically named. Their placid contentment was now and then rudely disturbed by the appearance of invaders from the upper provinces. The Rāma-epic records a tradition that the Vaṅgas acknowledged the supremacy of the ruler of Ayodhyā.<sup>1</sup> The people of the lower Ganges sometimes fought for their independence but occasionally "followed a cane-like course as against a river torrent." The Great Epic refers to victorious campaigns undertaken by Karna, Krishṇa, and Bhīmasena in these parts of India. Karna is said to have vanquished the Suhmas, the Puṇḍras, and the Vaṅgas, and constituted Vaṅga and Aṅga into one *vishaya* of which he was the *Adhyaksha* or ruler. Krishṇa defeated both the Vaṅgas and the Puṇḍras. His wrath was specially directed towards the "false" Vāsudeva, lord of the Puṇḍras, who is said to have united Vaṅga, Puṇḍra, and Kirāta into a powerful kingdom, and entered into an alliance with Jarāsandha of Magadha. Before he met his doom at the hands of Krishṇa, Puṇḍraka-Vāsudeva had to suffer humiliation at the hands of the Pāṇḍu princes. Bhīmasena, in the course of his eastern campaign, subdued all the local princes of Bengal including Samudrasena, his son Chandrasena, and the great lord of the Puṇḍras himself. In many respects Puṇḍraka-Vāsudeva was a remarkable figure, and may be looked upon as the epic precursor of the Gauḍa conquerors of the seventh and eighth centuries. In the end both the Vaṅgas and the Puṇḍras had to bring tribute to the court of Yudhishthira.

While suffering much at the hands of conquerors from upper India, the Bengal kings availed themselves of opportunities to wreak vengeance on their tormentors. They took part in the internecine strife of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍus, and appear in the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* as allies of Duryodhana. The *Bhīshma-parvan* gives a thrilling account of a lively encounter between a scion of the Pāṇḍus and the "mighty ruler of the Vaṅgas":

• "Beholding that lance levelled at Duryodhana, the lord of the Vaṅgas quickly arrived on the scene with his elephant that towered like a mountain. He covered the Kuru king's chariot with the body of the animal. Ghaṭotkacha, with eyes reddened with rage, flung his upraised missile at the beast. Struck with the dart the elephant bled profusely and fell down dead. The rider quickly jumped down from the falling animal" and Duryodhana rushed to his rescue.

<sup>1</sup> II. 10. 37.

While some of the Bengal kings fought on elephants, others rode on "ocean-bred steeds of the hue of the moon." Their *dhvajās* or standards are also referred to in the epic.

While epic stories recall the military prowess of Bengal rulers "of fierce energy," the Pāli chronicles of Ceylon preserve memories of another field of their activities. A prince named Sihabāhu, who inherited the kingdom of Vaṅga from a maternal ancestor, renounced his claims in favour of a relation, and built a new city in the kingdom of Lāla which came to be known as Sihapura. The new metropolis has been identified by some with Sihor in Kāthiāwār, and the territory in which it lay, with Lāṭa. But Kāthiāwār was known in ancient times as Surāshṭra, and not as Lāṭa. The close association with Vaṅga suggests that Lāla of the Pāli chronicles is Lāḍha of the Jaina *Sūtras* and Rāḍhā of Sanskrit records. There is a place in Rāḍhā known as Singur which is taken by some to represent the Simhapura of the Island Chronicles.<sup>1</sup>

The eldest son of Sihabāhu was Vijaya. The prince incurred the displeasure of his father and his people by his evil ways, and had to go into exile. With his followers he sailed in a ship to Sopara, north of Bombay. But the violence of his attendants alienated the people of the locality. The prince had to embark again, and eventually "landed in Laṅkā, in the region called Tambapanni." The date assigned by the Ceylonese tradition to the arrival of Vijaya and his "lion-men" (Sihalas) in the island is the year of the *Parinirvāṇa* according to the reckoning of Ceylon (544 B.C.). But it is difficult to say how far this date can be relied upon<sup>2</sup> or what amount of historical truth is contained in the story. It may be based upon some genuine tradition relating to the early political relations between Bengal and Ceylon, or may be simply an echo of the later colonial enterprises emanating from Bengal to the over-sea territories towards the south and the south-east.

The few scattered notices of Bengal collected above are but poor substitutes of history. But they enable us to form some general conclusions: First, that the early settlers in Bengal and Orissa

<sup>1</sup> *JASB.* 1910, p. 604; for other views see *CHI.* i. xxv; see also *IHQ.* ii (1926), p. 6; ix (1933), pp. 724 ff. Singur is a notable place in the Hooghly district (Hunter, iii. 307).

<sup>2</sup> In the time of the *Periplus* (60-80 A.D.) the island was still known as Taprobane (Tambapanni or Tāmraparṇī), and Palaesimundu. It is only in the *Geography* of Ptolemy that we come across the new name Salike along with the older designations (Taprobane and Simoundou). The inhabitants of Salike were known to Ptolemy as *Salai*, doubtless the *Sihalas* of Ceylonese tradition. The name *Si hala* is also met with in the Nāgārjunikonda inscriptions of about the third century A.D.

were closely allied tribes of non-Aryan origin, but a gradual process of Aryan infiltration began in the first millennium B.C. Secondly, that there were settled governments in Bengal long before the commencement of the historic period. Thirdly, that the country was normally divided into a number of states some of which occasionally grew very powerful. Lastly, that the kingdoms of Bengal had intimate relations with her immediate neighbours on the west.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY HISTORY FROM 326 B.C. TO 320 A.D.

THE veil of darkness that enshrouds the early history of Bengal is partially lifted in the latter half of the fourth century B.C. A considerable portion of the country now constitutes the domain of a powerful nation, whose sway extended over the whole of ancient Vanga, and possibly some adjoining tracts. Greek and Latin writers refer to the people as the Gangaridai (*variant* Gandaridai). The Sanskrit equivalent of the term is difficult to determine. Classical scholars take the word to mean "the people of the Ganges region." Curtius, Plutarch, and Solinus<sup>1</sup> agree in placing them on the *further*, that is the eastern, bank of the Ganges. Diodorus, too, in one passage locates "the dominions of the nation of the Praisioi and the Gandaridai," whose king had 4,000 elephants trained and equipped for war, *beyond* the Ganges.<sup>2</sup> This accords with the statements of Curtius and Plutarch. There is, however, another passage of Diodorus<sup>3</sup> where it is stated that

"This river (Ganges), which is 30 stades in width, flows from north to south and empties into the ocean, forming the boundary *towards the east* of the tribe of the Gandaridae who possesses the largest number of elephants . . . 4,000 elephants equipped for war."

This has been taken by some writers to imply that the territory of the Gandaridae (Gangaridai) lay to the *west* of the Ganges, understanding by the term the Bhāgīrathī or the Hooghly. But Diodorus himself does not make it clear in this passage as to whether he means by the Ganges the westernmost branch or the easternmost one. A third passage of the same writer<sup>4</sup> seems to suggest that the easternmost branch that separates our country from Further India, that is Indo-China, is meant. The passage is quoted below :

"India . . . is inhabited by very many nations among which the greatest of all is that of the Gandaridai, against whom Alexander did not undertake an expedition, being deterred by the multitude of their elephants. This region is separated from Further India by the greatest river in those parts, for it has a breadth of 30 stadia, but it adjoins the rest of India which Alexander had conquered."

The river mentioned in this passage as having "a breadth of 30 stadia" and forming the boundary between Further India and

<sup>1</sup> M'Crindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, 221, 310; *Megasthenes and Arrian* (1926), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> xvii. 93.

<sup>3</sup> ii. 37.

<sup>4</sup> xviii. 6.



the Gangaridai is doubtless the Ganges. In the light of this evidence it is more reasonable to identify the stream which, according to a passage quoted earlier, forms the boundary towards the east of the tribe of the Gandaridae, with the easternmost branch of the Ganges rather than with the westernmost mouth of the river.

Incidentally the passages quoted from Diodorus seem to imply that the famous Sicilian writer uses the term Gandaridai (Gangaridai) in two different senses. In its restricted sense he confines it to the easternmost part of India, while in its wider sense he means by it the whole country between the part of "India which Alexander had conquered" and Further India. It is the restricted sense of the term which alone is known to the natural historians and geographers of classical antiquity. Pliny tells us<sup>1</sup> that the final part of the course of the Ganges is through the country of the Gangarides. Ptolemy says<sup>2</sup> that "all the country about the mouths of the Ganges is occupied by the Gangaridai." He mentions Tamalites separately in a way that implies connection with the territory of the Mandalai and Palibothra (Pāṭaliputra) rather than with the Gangaridai. The truth seems to be that while Greek and Latin historians and geographers in general restricted the dominion of the Gangaridai to the territory about the mouths of the Ganges (*Gaṅgāśroto'ntara* of the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa), and one great authority seems to distinguish it from Tamalites (Tāmralipti), Diodorus sometimes uses the term in an extended sense to mean the entire territory between the Hyphasis (Beas) and the borders of Further India or the Trans-Gangetic peninsula. This peculiar use of the term by the Sicilian writer explains why in certain passages the king of the Prasioi<sup>3</sup> and the Gandaridai is sometimes referred to simply as the king of the Gandaridai.<sup>4</sup> The reference to the possession of 4,000 elephants by the king of the Prasioi and the Gandaridai in Book xvii, and by the Gangaridae in Book ii, Ch. 37, suggests that the Gangaridae of Book ii are not the Gangaridae proper of the lower Ganges valley, but the united nation of the Prasioi and the Gandaridai of Book xvii. The extended meaning given to the name Gandaridai (Gangaridai) by Diodorus may have been due in part to the presence in upper India of a city called Gange<sup>5</sup> whose existence is vouched for by Artemidoros and Strabo. This city must be carefully distinguished from Gange, the royal

<sup>1</sup> *Megasthenes and Arrian*, 137; Monahan, *EHB*. 5.

<sup>2</sup> New edition, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> The name appears in various slightly differing forms in classical writings (cf. *CHI*. i. 408, f.n. 5). The form 'Prasioi' is adopted in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. xvii. 93.

<sup>5</sup> *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, 77.

residence of the Gangaridai, mentioned by Ptolemy and apparently by the author of the *Periplus*.

It is not easy to determine the precise boundary line between the Gangaridai proper and the people styled the Prasioi who had their capital at Pātaliputra. The evidence of Ptolemy suggests that in his days, or in those of the writers on whom he relies, the kingdom, of which Pātaliputra was the royal residence, apparently extended as far as the Ganges and may have included Tāmralipti. The Gangaridai lay beyond this territory. The exact political relationship between the Prasioi and the Gangaridai in the days of Alexander is not free from a certain amount of ambiguity. This is due in part to the somewhat equivocal language used by the classical historians or their translators. Curtius refers to the Gangaridæ and the Prasioi as two nations under one king, Agrammes, but immediately afterwards makes Poros testify to the "strength of the nation and kingdom" which words imply a united realm and not a dual monarchy. Diodorus, too, speaks of the nation of the Prasioi and the Gandaridai whose king was Xandrames. The people over whom this prince ruled is farther on represented *simply as the Gandaridai*, a use of the term whose significance has been sought to be explained above. Plutarch refers to "the kings of the Gandaridai and the Prasioi" implying the existence of a plurality of such rulers. They were reported to be waiting for Alexander with an army of 80,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 8,000 war chariots, and 6,000 fighting elephants. As the king mentioned by Curtius and Diodorus had only 20,000 horse, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 four-horsed chariots and 3,000 or 4,000 elephants, the additional forces mentioned by Plutarch may, in the opinion of some, point to an extra contingent furnished by a second prince who may be identified with the king of the Gangaridæ proper if the first ruler was the monarch of the Prasioi. It is, however, worthy of notice that the number of foot soldiers remains constant in the three accounts. As regards the number of elephants, the discrepancy between the accounts of Curtius and Diodorus suggests divergence of tradition rather than reinforcement by an additional contingent. The bloated number of chariots and horses in the pages of Plutarch is capable of a similar explanation. It is significant that a few lines farther on Plutarch, too, like Curtius and Diodorus, speaks of the "whole country" beyond the Ganges which "Alexander could easily have taken possession of" as the domain of "*the king*" who "was hated and despised by his subjects for the wickedness of his disposition and the meanness of his origin"—characteristics which cannot fail to recall the famous description of Agrammes by Curtius and of Xandrames by Diodorus. The epithet, "son of a barber," and

sovereignty over the Prasioi undoubtedly point to the identification of the ruler in question with a king of the Nanda line, the *nāpita-kumāra* of the *Parīśiṣṭa-parvan* of Hemachandra, or his son.

It may reasonably be inferred from the statements of the Greek and Latin writers that about the time of Alexander's invasion, the Gangaridai were a very powerful nation, and either formed a dual monarchy with the Prasioi, or were otherwise closely associated with them on equal terms in a common cause against the foreign invader.

When Alexander reached the Beas and was eager to cross over to the Ganges valley, the information reached his ears that the king or kings of the Gangaridai and the Prasioi were awaiting his attack with a powerful army. The shock of battle was narrowly missed. The war-worn veterans of the Macedonian king persuaded their leader to trace back his steps to the Hydaspes and ultimately to Babylon.

After the withdrawal of Alexander, the Greek menace was evanescent for several generations. Chandragupta welded the major part of India into one empire. The evidence of Greek as well as Buddhist writers seems to suggest that the authority of the great Mauryas was acknowledged in deltaic as well as in northern Bengal.

The Brāhmī record at Mahāsthān, which is usually assigned to the Maurya period, refers to Puṇḍranagara as a prosperous city. It undoubtedly enjoyed the blessings of good government. Its store-house was filled with coins styled *gaṇḍakas* and *kākanikas* which were at the service of the people in times of emergency due to water, fire, and pests. The reference to coins in this old inscription is of peculiar interest. As is well known, numerous punch-marked coins have been discovered in various parts of Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

The discovery of terracotta figurines of the Śuṅga period at Mahāsthāngarh proves that the city of Puṇḍravardhana continued to flourish even after the fall of the imperial Mauryas. The site of Silua in the Noakhali district has yielded fragments of a colossal image the pedestal of which bore an inscription assigned by archaeologists to the second century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The accounts of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy seem to indicate that in the first two centuries of the Christian era the whole of deltaic Bengal was organised into a powerful kingdom with its capital at Gange, a great market-town on the banks of the Ganges. This city of Gange is placed by Ptolemy considerably to the south-east of "T(h)amalites"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ch. xvi *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> ASI. 1930-34, Part 1. 38-39.

or Tāmralipti (about whose exact position his information does not seem to be accurate), below the junction of the branches of the Ganges leading to the Mega (possibly the Hooghly) and Kamberikhon mouths respectively. The capital, which thus probably lay in Central Bengal, produced muslin of the finest sort which was much prized by the peoples of the west. There were gold mines in the vicinity. The *Periplus* refers to a gold coin which is called *Caltis*.

The reference to gold mines is interesting. One cannot fail to be reminded of the "Gold District" (Suvarṇa-vīthi) of a Faridpur Grant, and also of the "Gold Village" (Suvarṇa-grāma) which replaced older Vikramapura as the capital of Vaṅga in the latter half of the thirteenth century A.D. As to the gold coin it is to be noted that a coin made of the precious metal has been unearthed at Mahāsthāngarh representing the standing bearded figure of Kanishka on the obverse and Nannaia on the reverse.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, difficult to say whether the coin mentioned in the *Periplus* was issued by the imperial government of the Kushānas, or some local administration in the Gangetic delta.

'Kushāna' coins have been discovered in several places in Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa. It is a debatable question whether these finds indicate any suzerainty of the Kushāna kings over these territories. Coins, as we know, travel by way of trade far beyond the limits of the kingdom where they are issued. In the absence of any corroborative evidence, therefore, it is not easy to say whether Bengal or any part of it ever formed a province of the Kushāna empire.

The next glimpse of the political condition of Bengal is afforded by the inscriptions of the age of Samudragupta. They disclose the existence of new kingdoms in place of the traditional realms mentioned in the epics and the early literature of the Jains and the Buddhists. In Eastern Bengal rose the kingdom of Samatāṭa. In Western Bengal we have the kingdom of Pushkarāṇa with its capital probably at Pokharnā in the Bankura district. It was ruled by Simhavarman towards the close of the third or beginning of the fourth century A.D. and then by his son Chandravarman. Chandravarman seems to have been a mighty warrior who extended his dominions eastwards as far as the Faridpur district. For the protection of the newly acquired territory he founded a fortress styled Chandravarma-koṭa.

It would appear that the general political condition of Bengal at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. was not probably very

<sup>1</sup> ASI. 1930-34, Part II. 256. It is probably an imitation of the issues of Kanishka which were in circulation in a later age in Eastern India.

different from that depicted in the epics. A number of sturdy states, sheltered by the great barriers of rivers and swamps, constituted its most prominent characteristic. Events, to be described later on, also show that, in this age, as in earlier times, they could occasionally form closer political associations and join hands to fight a common external aggressor.





## CHAPTER IV

### RISE OF GAUDA AND VANGA (320-650 A.D.)

#### I. BENGAL UNDER THE IMPERIAL GUPTAS

THE establishment of the Gupta empire marks the end of the independent existence of the various states that flourished in Bengal at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. With the exception of Samatāṭa, the rest of Bengal was definitely incorporated in the Gupta empire by the time of Samudragupta. The ruler of Samatāṭa, to quote the conventional and characteristic court-language of the Guptas, 'gratified the emperor Samudragupta by payment of all kinds of tribute, by obedience to his commands and by approach for paying court to him.'<sup>1</sup> In other words, Samatāṭa was a tributary state, acknowledging the suzerainty of the Gupta Emperor, but with full autonomy in respect of internal administration. The exact limits of Samatāṭa cannot be ascertained, but it may be taken as roughly equivalent to Eastern Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

Whether the subjugation of Bengal took place during the reign of Samudragupta, or was accomplished wholly or even partly by his father,<sup>3</sup> is difficult to decide. An inscription engraved on an iron pillar at Meherauli, near the Qutb Minār at Delhi, mentions, among other military exploits of a king called Chandra, that he 'extirpated in battle in the Vāṅga countries his enemies who offered him a united resistance.'<sup>4</sup> In the absence of full details about this king Chandra, his identity is a matter of great uncertainty and has formed a subject of keen controversy among scholars. He has been identified, for example, both with Chandragupta I<sup>5</sup> and Chandragupta II.<sup>6</sup> In the former case we must hold that the father of Samudragupta had already added Vāṅga<sup>7</sup> to the Gupta empire. In

<sup>1</sup> Allahabad Pillar Ins. I. 22. CII. III. 8, 14.

<sup>2</sup> For boundaries of Samatāṭa, see *supra* p. 17 and *infra* p. 85, f.n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The question whether the Guptas ruled in Bengal before Chandragupta has been discussed *infra* pp. 69-70.

<sup>4</sup> CII. III. 141.

<sup>5</sup> Fleet (CII. III. 140, f.n. 1); Dr. R. G. Basak (HNI. 14ff); Dr. S. K. Aiyangar (JIH. VI. *University Supplement*, 14-22).

<sup>6</sup> Hoernle (IA. XXI. 43). Formerly V. A. Smith also held this view (JRAS. 1897, p. 1; EHI. 3rd ed., p. 290, f.n. 1).

<sup>7</sup> Vāṅga countries (*Vaṅgeshu*) may mean Vāṅga (Eastern and Southern Bengal) and other parts of Bengal, or different principalities in Vāṅga.



the latter case, it must be presumed that Vaṅga had shaken off the yoke of the Gupta empire, and the son of Samudragupta had to reconquer the province by defeating the combination of the peoples or different states of Bengal.

There is, however, no definite evidence that Chandra of the Meherauli inscription is either Chandragupta I or Chandragupta II, and he may be altogether a different person whose identity yet remains to be established.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the uncertainty of the data furnished by the Meherauli Iron Pillar inscription, it shows that although Bengal was divided into a number of independent states they did combine and offer a vigorous resistance against a foreign invader named Chandra. The latter was either one of the two Gupta Emperors named Chandragupta, or an earlier ruler whose aggressive policy helped the Guptas by weakening the resources of Bengal and its power of resistance. The latter hypothesis appears more probable, and it is not unlikely that the original kingdom of the Guptas included a portion of Bengal which provided them a basis for further conquests (see *infra* pp. 69-70).

Evidence is not altogether lacking that Samudragupta himself carried his victorious arms into Bengal. For among the kings of Āryāvarta, who were, according to the Allahabad *Prāśasti*, uprooted by Samudragupta, we find the name of Chandravarman who may be reasonably identified with the king of that name mentioned in the Susunia inscription as ruler of Pushkarāṇa.<sup>2</sup> This Pushkarāṇa has been plausibly identified with the village named Pokharnā, 25 miles north-east of Susunia on the south bank of the river Dāmodar, which has yielded considerable antiquities reaching back to the Gupta period, if not earlier.<sup>3</sup> Chandravarman may thus be regarded as the king of Rādhā or the region immediately to its south,

<sup>1</sup> MM. Haraprasād Śāstri identifies this king with king Chandravarman, one of the nine kings of Āryāvarta defeated by Samudragupta as mentioned in his Allahabad Pillar inscription. He holds that this Chandravarman is the same king who is referred to in the Susunia Rock inscription as son of Simhavarman, ruler of Pushkarāṇa, and believes further, on the strength of an inscription found at Mandasor, that Pushkarāṇa, where this family of kings ruled, is to be located at Pokharan in the Jodhpur State. MM. Śāstri's view has been accepted by V. A. Smith and R. D. Banerji: MM. H. P. Śāstri (*EL.* XII. 315 ff; XIII. 133; *IA.* 1913, pp. 217 ff); V. A. Smith (*EHl.* 4th ed., p. 307, f.n. 1); R. D. Banerji (*EL.* XIV. 367 ff).

Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri holds that Chandra may be one of the "two kings named Sadā-Chandra and Chandrāmśa mentioned among the post-Andhran kings of Nāga lineage" in the Purāṇas (*PHAI.* 4th ed., p. 449). None of these proposals, however, is supported by convincing arguments.

<sup>2</sup> *IHQ.* I. 254-55; *PHAI.* 4th ed., p. 448.

<sup>3</sup> *ASI.* 1927-28, pp. 188-89.

by defeating whom Samudragupta paved the way for the conquest of Bengal.

Whatever view we might take of the actual process of the conquest of Bengal, the epigraphic records leave no doubt that in the days of Kumāragupta I Northern Bengal formed an important administrative division of the Gupta empire under the name of Puṇḍravardhana-*bhukti*.<sup>1</sup> It was placed in charge of a Governor appointed by the Emperor himself. The Governor, in his turn, appointed officers to take charge of the various districts into which the province was divided. It is to be noted, however, that occasionally even the district officer seems to have been appointed directly by the Gupta Emperor.

The Dāmodarpur copper-plates of Budhagupta<sup>2</sup> indicate that Northern Bengal formed an integral part of the great Gupta empire down to the end of the fifth century A.D. Another inscription from Dāmodarpur, dated in the year 544 A.D.,<sup>3</sup> refers to a suzerain ruler, whose name ended in -*gupta*, but whose proper name is lost. In that year the son of the Emperor was acting as his Governor in Puṇḍravardhana-*bhukti*. It appears very probable that the overlord in question belonged to the dynasty of the Later Guptas<sup>4</sup> who claimed suzerainty over Northern Bengal down to the end of the sixth century A.D.

Although Samatāṭa was a semi-independent feudatory state in the time of Samudragupta, it seems to have been gradually incorporated into the Gupta empire, for in the year 507-8 A.D. Mahārāja Vainyagupta was the ruler of this region, and granted lands in the Tippera district.<sup>5</sup> He issued gold coins and assumed the title Dvādaśāditya.<sup>6</sup> Although he is titled Mahārāja in his own record, he is given the title Mahārājādhirāja in a seal discovered

<sup>1</sup> Dhanadīlaha CP. Year 113 (432-33 A.D.), *EI.* xvii. 345; Baigram CP. Year 128 (447-48 A.D.), *EI.* xxi. 78; Damodarpur CP. Nos. 1 and 2, Years 124, 128 (*EI.* xv. 129ff; xvii. 193).

<sup>2</sup> Nos. 3 and 4 (*EI.* xv. 134ff); cf. also Paharpur CP. dated 159 G.E. (*EI.* xx. 61; *SPP.* xxxix. 143).

<sup>3</sup> No. 5, *EI.* xv. 141 ff. Date corrected in *EI.* xvii. 193.

<sup>4</sup> It has been suggested that the overlord in question was Vishnugupta, a large number of whose coins have been found with the legend 'Chandrāditya' on the reverse (*EHBP.* 13-14).

<sup>5</sup> Gunaighar CP. *IHQ.* vi. (1930), pp. 40 ff. It records a grant of land from the victorious camp of Kṛipura by Mahārāja Vainyagupta, who meditates on the feet of Mahādeva, at the request of Mahārāja Rudradatta, a slave to his feet in the Year 188 current (507-8 A.D.). The land granted must have been in the neighbourhood of Gunaighar (Gupikāgrahāra of the ins.) where the plate was found, about eighteen miles to the north-west of Comilla.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *IHQ.* ix. 784 ff.

at Nālandā.<sup>1</sup> The exact status of Vainyagupta is difficult to determine. The most reasonable view seems to be that he was a member of the Imperial Gupta family and acted at first as a *de facto* independent ruler whose dominions included Eastern Bengal. Subsequently, taking advantage of the decline of the Imperial Guptas, and also perhaps of the internal disunion and discord, he declared himself openly as the Emperor.<sup>2</sup> In any case, his career proves the direct Gupta rule over Samatāṭa at the beginning of the sixth century A.D. Kṛipura, the place from which he issued his land-grant in 507-8 A.D., was evidently the seat of his government. It has not yet been identified, but is possibly to be looked for in Bengal.

Of Suhma or Rādhā, the remaining part of Bengal, we have no detailed information for the period during which it was subject to the Gupta rule.<sup>3</sup>

## II. INDEPENDENT KINGDOMS IN BENGAL

The different stages in the decline and downfall of the Gupta empire have not yet been fixed with any degree of certainty. There is, however, no doubt, that it showed visible signs of decline towards the beginning of the sixth century A.D.

Apart from what we know of the general political condition in Northern India, this may also be inferred from the assumption of higher rank by the Governor of Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal)<sup>4</sup> and the fact that Vainyagupta was ruling as practically an independent king in Eastern Bengal. Within half a century the death-blow was dealt to the mighty Gupta empire by the sweeping victories of Yaśodharman. In his Mandasor inscription this great military adventurer, who suddenly leapt to fame and power, proudly claims to have extended his conquests as far as the Brahmaputra river.<sup>5</sup> How far the boasts of Yaśodharman were founded on fact it is difficult to say. But in any case the empire of Yaśodharman was a short-lived one and no trace of it was to be found after the

<sup>1</sup> ASI. 1930-34, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> IHQ. ix. 784 ff; 989 ff; vol. x. 154 ff.

<sup>3</sup> No Gupta records have been found in Rādhā. Gupta coins have been discovered at Kalighat, Hooghly and Jessore (Allan, CCEM. cxxiv ff; JASB. LIII. 148 ff). As will be shown *infra* p. 52, Rādhā was probably administered by Vijayasena, a Governor of Vainyagupta at the beginning of the sixth century A.D.

<sup>4</sup> In the two Dāmodarpur CPP. (Nos. 1 and 2) of the reign of Kumāragupta, the Governor of Puṇḍravardhana is called simply '*uparika*,' but in those of Budhagupta (Nos. 3 and 4) and a later one (No. 5) he is called *Uparika-Mahārāja*.

<sup>5</sup> Mandasor Ins. I. 5. (CII. III. 146).

middle of the sixth century A.D. The Gupta empire, already weakened by the inroads of the Hūṇas, collapsed before the onslaughts of Yaśodharman.

The fall of the Gupta empire, and the failure of Yaśodharman to rebuild one on a durable basis, led to the political disintegration of Northern India marked by the rise of a number of independent powers. The more prominent of these were the Pushyabhūti of Śthāṇviśvara (Thaneswar), the Maukharis of Kosala or Oudh and the Later Guptas of Magadha and Malwa. The Later Guptas may have been an offshoot of the Imperial Guptas, but as yet we have no positive evidence in support of this view. They, however, continued the traditions of the Gupta sovereignty in the central and eastern part of the Gupta empire. Bengal also took advantage of the political situation to shake off the foreign yoke and two powerful independent kingdoms *viz.*, Vaṅga and Gauḍa were established there in the sixth century A.D.

### III. THE KINGDOM OF SAMATĀṬA OR VAṅGA

The first independent kingdom that arose in Bengal on the ruins of the Gupta empire seems to have comprised originally the Eastern and Southern Bengal and the southern part of Western Bengal. Two of its important provinces administered by Governors were Vardhamāna-*bhukti* and Navyāvakāśikā (or Suvarṇavīthi),<sup>1</sup> roughly corresponding respectively to Western and Southern Bengal. It is highly probable that the headquarters of the rulers themselves were in East Bengal and that it was directly under their administration.

Five inscriptions<sup>2</sup> discovered at or near Koṭālipādā in the district of Faridpur and one in the Burdwan district<sup>3</sup> reveal the existence of three rulers of this kingdom named Gopachandra, Dharmāditya and Samāchāradeva. The title Mahārājādhirāja assumed by all

<sup>1</sup> See *supra* p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Three of these were edited by F. E. Pargiter in *IA.* xxxix (1910), pp. 193-216. These are (1) the Grant of Dharmāditya, Year 3; (2) Second Grant of the same king; and (3) Grant of Gopachandra, Year 18 (for date cf. *HNI.* 191). The fourth Grant, the Ghugrāhāti cp. of Samāchāradeva was edited by R. D. Banerji (*JASB.* N.S. vi. 429); Pargiter (*JASB.* N.S. vii. 476); and Dr. N. K. Bhattasali (*EI.* xviii. 74 ff). Mr. R. D. Banerji held that "all these four grants are forgeries" (*JASB.* N.S. vi. 429 ff; vii. 289 ff; x. 425 ff). Dr. Bloch also regarded the copper-plate of Samāchāradeva as spurious. (*ASI.* 1907-8, p. 256). Pargiter opposed this view (*JASB.* N.S. vii. 499; *JRAS.* 1912, pp. 710 ff) and their genuineness is no longer doubted by any scholar. The fifth copper-plate issued in Year 7 of Samāchāradeva, and found at Kurpālā, is yet unpublished.

<sup>3</sup> Mallasārūl cp. of Gopachandra, Year 3. (*EI.* xxiii. 155).

these kings proves that they were independent and powerful. This title, in contrast to the subordinate title of Mahārāja applied to Vainyagupta, who ruled shortly before them and perhaps over the same locality, undoubtedly indicates a changed status and the disappearance of the last vestige of the imperial authority of the Guptas over this region. The issue of gold coins by Samāchāradeva<sup>1</sup> supports the same conclusion.

A connection between the old and the new kingdom seems to be established by the fact that one Mahārāja Vijayasena was probably a vassal chief both of Vainyagupta and of Gopachandra.<sup>2</sup> The identity of the person of this name serving under these two kings cannot be definitely proved, but it is generally accepted,<sup>3</sup> and we may assume, therefore, that there was no long interval between the reigns of Vainyagupta (507-8 A.D.) and Gopachandra. If we assume further, as seems very likely, that Vijayasena, who ruled over the Vardhamāna-bhukti under Gopachandra, also held the same office under Vainyagupta, we may reasonably conclude that Vainyagupta ruled over Eastern, Southern and Western Bengal, and that this imperial province of the Guptas constituted an independent kingdom under Gopachandra and his successors.

Neither the relationship between the three kings Dharmāditya, Gopachandra and Samāchāradeva nor their order of succession can

<sup>1</sup> For gold coins of Samāchāradeva cf. *JASB.* N.S. xix. *Num Suppl.*, 54 ff. The inference derived from the legends of these coins that Samāchāradeva was a vassal of Śaśāṅka (*IC.* iv. 225) must be definitely rejected. It rests upon the very doubtful reading *Śrī Narendravinata* on the reverse of the coin described by V. A. Smith in *IMC.* i. 120, pl. xvi, 11. Smith said that the three letters following Narendra "look like *vinata*," but Allan has read the legend as *Narendrāditya* (*CCBM.* 149), and the legend on the reverse of the other type of coins of Samāchāradeva has been read with certainty by both Smith (*op. cit.* 122) and Allan (*op. cit.* 150) as *Narendrāditya*.

Mr. R. D. Banerji, on the other hand, read the legend in both cases as *Narendravinata* (*ASI.* 1913-14, p. 260) and held that it cannot be anything else. With all due deference to Mr. Banerji's emphatic assertion, the reading *Narendrāditya* seems to me to be preferable, and we may reasonably hold that Samāchāradeva assumed the title Narendrāditya in imitation of the Gupta kings.

But even assuming that the reading '*Narendravinata*' is correct, its interpretation as "fully subdued or obedient to Narendra," and the identification of Narendra with Śaśāṅka are of extremely doubtful character, to say the least of it. Against the inference based on a series of doubtful data must be placed the clear evidence of the inscriptions of Samāchāradeva that he was an independent monarch.

<sup>2</sup> Vijayasena is the Dūtaka of the Gunaighar Grant and is described as *Mahāpratihāra Mahāpūlupati Pañchādihikaraṇ-oparika* and *Mahārāja Śrī-Mahāśmanta* (ll. 15-16, *IHQ.* vi. 55). In the Mallasārul Ins. he is called Mahārāja, but he uses his own seal.

<sup>3</sup> As to the contrary view (*IC.* vi. 106-7), cf. p. 53, fn. 2, ll. 4-10.

be definitely determined. Pargiter's view<sup>1</sup> that Dharmāditya was the first king and "Gopachandra succeeded him, with no one intervening unless it was for a very short interval" is generally accepted. But if we assume the identity of Vijayasena, we should rather regard Gopachandra as the earliest of the three, and Dharmāditya as coming immediately after him.<sup>2</sup> Samāchāradeva is generally regarded as having flourished after the other two, but it is difficult to say whether there were one or more intervening kings, at present unknown to us.

The existence of a few kings of this line, later than Samāchāradeva, is rendered probable by a large number of gold coins found mostly in different parts of Eastern Bengal, notably at Sabhar (Dacca district) and Koṭālipāḍā (Faridpur district).<sup>3</sup> These are rude and debased imitations of Gupta coins, sometimes found along with those of Śaśāṅka and Samāchāradeva, which have been referred to the sixth or seventh century A.D. Only two of these coins bear names of kings that can be read with some degree of certainty. The first is a rude copy of Gupta coin of Archer type with the letters 'Prithu vī(ra)' on the left, below the bow, and 'ja' between

<sup>1</sup> IA. 1910, pp. 206 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Pargiter (*op. cit.*) regarded Dharmāditya as earlier than Gopachandra on two grounds *viz.*, (i) the use of earlier and later forms of *y* in their respective plates; (ii) the additional epithets *pratita dharmasīla* applied to the land-measurer Śivachandra in the plate of the latter. The first should never have been put forward as a serious argument, for experience has shown that palaeography does not offer a safe basis for comparative chronology within a short period of time, say, less than a century. This is clearly demonstrated in the present instance by the fact that in the Mallasārul cp. of Gopachandra the earliest of the three forms of *y* noted by Pargiter has been exclusively used, while the first plate of Dharmāditya (I. 27) shows a distinctly later form of *ś*. The addition of epithets to Śivachandra may no doubt be cogently explained by his attainment of seniority in service, but may be due to purely personal predilections of the writer. It may also be argued that the epithets were done away with after Śivachandra had been sufficiently long in service when his name was too well-known to require any testimonial. In any case this cannot be regarded as a more cogent argument in support of the priority of Dharmāditya over Gopachandra than the identity of Vijayasena of the Gunaighar and Mallasārul plates favouring the opposite view. For if Gopachandra ruled after Dharmāditya we have to assume that Vijayasena served as a Governor under Vainyagupta, Dharmāditya, Gopachandra and other kings, if any, who might have intervened between them. This is certainly not impossible, but less probable than the other view that Vijayasena served only two kings, Vainyagupta and Gopachandra. Although, therefore, no certain conclusion is possible, it seems more reasonable to take Gopachandra as earlier than Dharmāditya.

<sup>3</sup> For these coins cf. IMC. i. 120, 122 (pl. xvi. 11, 18); CCBM. cvi-cvii, 154, (pl. xxiv. 17-19); JASB. N. S. xix. Num. Suppl. 58 ff; *Ibid.* xxi. Num. Suppl. 1 ff.

feet. The name of the king who issued it was probably, therefore, *Prithuvīra*, *Prithujavīra* or *Prithuvīraja*.<sup>1</sup>

The second coin belongs to a class of which several have been found. On most of them the legend has been read as *Sudhanyā*, but one appears to read *Śrī-Sudhanyāditya*.<sup>2</sup>

These kings, and others whose names are not recorded on the gold coins issued by them, presumably ruled in *Vaṅga*, and may be regarded as later rulers of the kingdom founded by *Gopachandra*. But nothing definite can be said about them until further evidence is forthcoming.

*Gopachandra*, who probably founded the independent kingdom, must have flourished not later than the second quarter of the sixth century A.D., i.e. within a generation of *Vaiṇyagupta*, for as we have assumed above, *Mahārāja Vijayasena* was a vassal chief of both. The latest known dates of *Gopachandra*, *Dharmāditya* and *Samāchāradeva* are respectively the regnal years 18, 3 and 14. Their reigns may thus be placed approximately between 525 and 575 A.D. with the margin of a few years both at the beginning and at the end.

The six grants by these kings give interesting details about the provincial administration. All the records taken together undoubtedly imply that there was a free, strong, and stable government in Bengal which brought peace and prosperity to the people and made them conscious of their power and potentialities.

How and when this independent kingdom of *Vaṅga* came to an end is not known to us. We learn from the *Mahākūṭa* inscription<sup>3</sup> that the *Chālukya* king *Kīrtivarman* claimed to have conquered, among other countries, *Aṅga*, *Vaṅga*, *Kaliṅga* and *Magadha*. As *Kīrtivarman* ceased to reign in 597-98 A.D., his conquests in Bengal may be placed in the last quarter of the sixth century A.D. It is not impossible, therefore, that either *Samāchāradeva*, or one of his successors, was the adversary of *Kīrtivarman*. The nature and extent of *Kīrtivarman*'s success are not known, but it might have some effect on the break-up of the kingdom of *Vaṅga*.

It is not also unlikely that the rise of the kingdom of *Gauḍa* under *Śaśāṅka* dealt the final death-blow to the independent kingdom of *Vaṅga*. This point will be further discussed in connection with the history of *Śaśāṅka* (see *infra* p. 59).

<sup>1</sup> Allan has described this unique coin in *Numismatic Chronicle*, Fifth Series, XIV. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *JASB.* N. S. XIX. Num. Suppl. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *IA.* XIX. 7.

## IV. RISE OF GAUḌA

The northern part of Western Bengal and the whole of Northern Bengal were evidently outside the dominions of Gopachandra and his successors. From about this period these territories came to be known as the Kingdom of Gauḍa, though this geographical term sometimes comprised the whole of Western Bengal.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth, throughout the Hindu period, Gauḍa and Vaṅga loosely denoted the two prominent political divisions of Bengal, the former comprising the Northern and either the whole or part of Western Bengal, and the latter, Southern and Eastern Bengal. Although actual political boundaries varied in different times, this rough geographical division persisted throughout the ages, but the names Puṇḍra or Varendrī (Northern Bengal), Rāḍhā or Suhma (Western Bengal), and Samatāṭa or Harikela (Eastern Bengal) were also used.

The hold of the Imperial Guptas was far stronger over Gauḍa than over Vaṅga or Samatāṭa. This explains the difference in the political evolution of these two constituent parts of Bengal. For while Vaṅga regained its independence in the first half of the sixth century A.D., the history of Gauḍa was a more chequered one. As we have seen above (*supra* p. 49), one of the Dāmodarpur copper-plates proves the Gupta sovereignty over Northern Bengal at least up to 544 A.D. It is very likely that the Gupta sovereign was a member of the Later Gupta dynasty. The Later Guptas might or might not have been connected by blood with the Imperial Guptas, but they were, to begin with, in possession of a substantial portion of the Gupta empire. That their pretensions as successors of the Imperial Guptas were tacitly recognised is proved by reference to the 'Gupta suzerainty' in the records of the Parivrājaka rulers of Bundelkhand in the sixth century A.D.<sup>2</sup>

One of the Later Gupta kings, Mahāsenagupta, claims to have defeated Susthitavarman (king of Kāmarūpa) on the banks of the Lauhitya or Brahmaputra river.<sup>3</sup> As he flourished towards the end of the sixth century A.D., it may be presumed that the suzerainty of

<sup>1</sup> For the extent of Gauḍa at different periods of history, see *supra* pp. 12-15. To the evidence cited there in order to show that Gauḍa included Rāḍhā and was situated close to the sea, the following may be added:

(i) According to the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, "in the country of Gaur there was a city Bardhamāna by name." (Tawney's transl. vii. 204).  
 (ii) The Gurgi Ins. of the 11th century A.D. states that '(out of fear of the Kalachuri king?) the lord of Gauḍa lies in the watery fort of the sea' (*EL*. xxii. 135).

<sup>2</sup> *CII*. iii. 95, 102, 107.

<sup>3</sup> Aphaṣṭ Ins. II. 10-11. *CII*. iii. 203, 206.



the Later Guptas continued over Northern Bengal throughout that century. This presumption is strengthened by the consideration that we know of no independent ruler of Gauda before the end of the sixth century A.D., and the first known independent king Śaśāṅka, who flourished early in the seventh century A.D., probably began his life as a Mahāsāmanta, presumably under Mahāsenagupta. The probability, therefore, is that Gauda acknowledged the suzerainty of the Later Guptas down to the end of the sixth century A.D.

The Gupta suzerainty over Gauda during the sixth century A.D. does not appear to have been either peaceful or uninterrupted. If Yaśodharman really carried his triumphal march right up to the bank of the Brahmaputra river, as he claims, that event must have considerably weakened the power and position of the Guptas in Gauda. It is exceedingly likely that although the Gupta suzerainty in Gauda survived this catastrophe, it gradually became more nominal than real. That Gauda came to be regarded as an important political unit, by the middle of the sixth century A.D., is proved by the Haraha inscription of the Maukhari king Īśānavarman dated 554 A.D.<sup>1</sup> In v. 13 of this inscription the king claims to have defeated the lord of the Andhras and "made the Gauda people take shelter towards the sea-shore after causing their land territories to be deprived of their future prospects."<sup>2</sup> The exact meaning of the expression is obscure, but the general purport seems to be clear. Īśānavarman, in course of his victorious campaigns, came into conflict with the Gaudas, ravaged their territories, and forced them to retreat towards the sea. The reference to the sea, combined with the expedition of Īśānavarman to the Andhra country, seems to indicate that the conflict with the Gaudas took place in the southern part of Western Bengal. Although this region was geographically included in Gauda, it was at the time of Īśānavarman's conquest, probably a part of the kingdom of Vaṅga, founded by Gopachandra, as we have seen above (*supra* p. 52). It is thus difficult to decide whether Īśānavarman's adversary was a ruler of Vaṅga or Gauda proper. In the latter case we must presume that the whole of Western Bengal then formed part of the kingdom of Gauda and the kingdom of Vaṅga came to be confined to Southern and Eastern Bengal.

The fight between Īśānavarman and the Gaudas must then be regarded as an episode in the long-drawn struggle between the Maukharis and the Later Guptas. For it is well-known that one

<sup>1</sup> *El.* xiv. 110 ff.

<sup>2</sup> This passage has been differently (cf. *supra* p. 37, f.n. 3) interpreted. The translation quoted here is that of Dr. R. G. Basak, *HNI*. 111.

of the outstanding facts in the early history of the Later Guptas was the unceasing struggle with the Maukharis who coveted Magadha and Gauḍa, which adjoined their territories but formed part of the dominions of the former. It is not necessary, for our present purpose, to give a detailed account of this struggle, and a few salient facts must suffice. Išānavarman, the most powerful of the Maukhari kings, conquered a part of Magadha and defeated the Gaudas.<sup>1</sup> The fact that his successors Śarvavarman and Avantivarman granted a village in the Shahabad district shows that they, too, were in possession of a part of Magadha.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the Later Gupta king Kumārāgupta defeated Išānavarman, and his son Dāmodaragupta also defeated the Maukharis.<sup>3</sup> It is thus evident that in the hereditary struggle between the Guptas and the Maukharis victory inclined alternately to the two sides none of which could claim any decisive success. But fortunes were more favourable to the next Gupta king Mahāsenagupta who carried his victorious arms up to the Lauhitya or Brahmaputra river, if not beyond it, and defeated Susthitavarman, king of Kāmarūpa.<sup>4</sup> Now, whether the home territory of Mahāsenagupta was Malwa or Magadha,<sup>5</sup> a point on which opinions differ, it is evident that both Magadha and Gauḍa formed part of his dominions and he put an end to the Maukhari aggression in these territories. This is confirmed by the fact that no other Maukhari king is known to have any pretensions of suzerainty over them. As the recorded dates

<sup>1</sup> Haraha Ins., *EI.* xiv. 110 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Deo-Baranark Ins. of Jivitagupta II, l. 15, *CII.* III. 216, 218. The ins. is fragmentary and the interpretation is conjectural.

<sup>3</sup> Aphaṣṭ Stone Ins. of Ādityasena, ll. 7-8, *CII.* III. 203, 206.

<sup>4</sup> See *supra* p. 55, f.n. 3 and *JASB.* N.S. xvii. 321. Dr. R. K. Mookerji held (*Harsha*, 25, f.n. 1) that Susthitavarman belonged to the Maukhari dynasty. But as R. D. Banerji has shown, this is certainly erroneous (*JBORS.* xiv. 255). In spite of Dr. Mookerji's arguments to the contrary (*JBORS.* xv. 252 ff), it is now generally held that Susthitavarman was king of Kāmarūpa.

<sup>5</sup> Originally the scholars held that the Later Guptas ruled in Magadha, and Fleet designates them as Guptas of Magadha (*CII.* III. Introduction, p. 14). Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri pointed out that according to Deo-Baranark Ins. of Jivitagupta II, the Maukhari kings Śarvavarman and Avantivarman held a considerable part of Magadha. He, therefore, held that "after the loss of Magadha the Later Guptas were apparently confined to 'Mālava' till Mahāsenagupta once more pushed his conquests as far as the Lauhitya" (*PHAI.* 2nd ed., p. 372, f.n. 3). Dr. R. K. Mookerji (*Harsha*, 60, 67), C. V. Vaidya (*Hist. Mēl. Hindu India*, i. 85) and Dr. D. C. Ganguly (*JBORS.* xix. 402) definitely locate the Later Gupta dynasty in Malwa. Mr. R. D. Banerji controverted these views and tried to establish the older view that the Later Guptas ruled in Magadha (*JBORS.* xiv. 254 ff). Mr. Banerji's views have been challenged by Dr. R. K. Mookerji (*JBORS.* xv. 251 ff) and Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri (*JBORS.* xv. 651 ff). No definite conclusion on this point seems possible.

of Śarvavarman and Avantivarman are respectively 553-54 and 569-70 A.D.,<sup>1</sup> it may be presumed that the Maukhari menace was definitely over and Mahāsenagupta re-established his supremacy over Magadha and Gauḍa towards the close of the sixth century A.D.

The exact political status of Gauḍa during this period is difficult to determine. It is unlikely that the Later Gupta kings directly administered the territory. The probability is that it was ruled by a local chief who acknowledged their suzerainty. But by the beginning of the seventh century A.D., if not a few years earlier, Gauḍa formed an independent kingdom under Śaśāṅka, and Magadha also formed a part of his dominions. The rise of this independent kingdom was probably facilitated by the great calamity which befell Mahāsenagupta who, according to some scholars, was disastrously defeated by the Kalachuris. The extent of the calamity can be measured by the fact that in the year 595 A.D., Ujjayinī, which was according to those scholars the capital of the Later Gupta kingdom of Mālava, was in possession of the Kalachuri king, Śaṅkaragaṇa, and the two young sons of Mahāsenagupta were forced to live in the court of king Prabhākaravardhana of Thaneshwar, whose mother Mahāsenaguptā was probably a sister of Mahāsenagupta. This reconstruction of the history of Mahāsenagupta<sup>2</sup> cannot, of course, be regarded as certain, but, if true, it explains the rise of the independent kingdom of Gauḍa-Magadha out of the ruins of the Later Gupta empire. It also explains why Śaśāṅka, the founder of this independent kingdom, was involved in a war with the Maukhari king and the ruler of Kāmarūpa, the two great enemies of the Later Guptas, and formed an alliance with Devagupta, king of Mālava. In other words, the political traditions of the sixth century were continued in the seventh century A.D.

It is not also unlikely that the invasion of the Tibetan king Srong Tsan dismembered the kingdoms of the Later Guptas in Eastern India and helped the rise of Śaśāṅka.<sup>3</sup> Another important

<sup>1</sup> These dates are known from coins, cf. *JRAS.* 1906, p. 848. According to the reading of Mr. Dikshit the dates are respectively 577-78 and 579-80. The readings of the dates on coins are obviously conjectural and cannot be relied upon. (*TK.* 55-60).

<sup>2</sup> This view is fully developed by Dr. D. C. Ganguly (*JBORS.* xix. 405 ff; *IHQ.* xii. 461) who even goes so far as to assert that it was the Kalachuri king Buddharāja, son of Śaṅkaragaṇa (and not Devagupta, as is generally held), who defeated and killed Grahavarman, the Maukharī king, and imprisoned his queen Rājyaśrī at Kanauj. These statements are not, however, supported by any reliable evidence and are based on the assumption that the Kalachuris were the only rulers of Mālava from 595 A.D. to 629 A.D. for which there is no proof (cf. *PHAI.* 4th ed., p. 514, fn. 1).

<sup>3</sup> See *infra* pp. 91-93.

factor towards the same end may be found in the conquest of Kirtivarman, the Chālukya king. As noted above (*supra* p. 54), he claims to have conquered Aṅga, Vaṅga, and Magadha, and this, if true, must have considerably weakened the position of the Later Guptas in Gauḍa and Magadha. Śaśāṅka might have taken advantage of this catastrophe to set up an independent kingdom in Gauḍa. The reaction of these important factors on the politics of Bengal is difficult to determine in view of the paucity of definite data, and the consequent uncertainty of all conclusions. We shall not, therefore, dwell any more on these speculative theories, but treat the history of Gauḍa under Śaśāṅka as an independent topic.

#### V. ŚAŚĀṆKA

Śaśāṅka occupies a prominent place in the history of Bengal. Unlike the three kings in lower Bengal who preceded him, he is more than a mere name to us. He is also the first known king of Bengal who extended his suzerainty over territories far beyond the geographical boundary of that province.

Of his early life and the circumstances under which he came to occupy the throne of Gauḍa we possess no definite information. A seal matrix cut in the rock of the hill-fort of Rohtasgarh records the name of 'Śrī-Mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅka' i.e. 'the illustrious great vassal Śaśāṅka'.<sup>1</sup> If this Śaśāṅka be the same as Śaśāṅka, king of Gauḍa, as has been usually held by scholars, it would follow that Śaśāṅka began his life as a subordinate ruler. Who his overlord was, we do not definitely know, but from what has been said in the preceding section (see *supra* p. 56), it appears most reasonable to hold that this overlord was no other than Mahāsenagupta. The theory that Śaśāṅka was originally a subordinate vassal of the Maukhari kings,<sup>2</sup> though not altogether improbable, is not supported by any convincing evidence. The view that Śaśāṅka was also known as Narendragupta is based on insufficient grounds, and even if it were true, there is hardly any justification for the belief that he was connected with the Guptas.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CII. III. 284.

<sup>2</sup> According to Dr. D. C. Ganguly, the Deo-Baranark Ins. "definitely settles that Śaśāṅka was a feudatory of Avantivarman and probably for a short period of his son Grahavarman" (IHQ. XII. 457). His fundamental assumption that Avantivarman was in possession of Magadha throughout his reign lacks any evidence. As noted *supra* p. 58, the probability is that Mahāsenagupta must have conquered Magadha, as otherwise he could hardly have proceeded up to the Brahmaputra river.

<sup>3</sup> PHAI. 4th ed., 514, f.n. 3; Allan, CCBM. LXIV. Mr. R. D. Banerji's view

All that we definitely know is that some time before 606 A.D. Śaśāṅka became the king of Gauḍa with his capital at Karpasuvarṇa, which has been identified with Rāṅgāmāti, six miles south-west of Berhampur in the Murshidabad district.<sup>1</sup>

There is hardly any doubt that both Northern and Western Bengal were included in the dominions of Śaśāṅka. Whether they included also Southern and Eastern Bengal cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. While the distant military expeditions of Śaśāṅka lend colour to the supposition that he must have already conquered the whole of Bengal, there is no positive evidence in support of it. On the other hand, Hiuen Tsang's reference to Śīlabhadra, the Buddhist patriarch of Nālandā, as being a scion of the Brahmanical royal family of Samatāṭa,<sup>2</sup> may be held to prove the existence of Samatāṭa as a separate independent state in the first half of the seventh century A.D.

But whatever may be the extent of his rule in Bengal, Śaśāṅka's dominions probably included Magadha from the very beginning, and he soon felt powerful enough to follow an aggressive foreign policy. He extended his suzerainty as far south as the Chilka Lake in Orissa. For, in a record dated in the year 619 A.D., Mahārāja Mahāsāmanta Śrī-Mādhavarāja (II), the king of the Śailodbhava dynasty ruling over Koṅgoda, invokes the name of Śaśāṅka as the suzerain.<sup>3</sup> Although the exact boundaries of Koṅgoda are not known, there is no doubt that it comprised the region round the Chilka Lake in Orissa, and probably extended south to the Ganjam district.<sup>4</sup> In order to extend his power to the province of Koṅgoda, Śaśāṅka must have defeated the Māna chiefs whom we find in possession of the intervening territory in 602 A.D.<sup>5</sup> The details of this or other campaigns that Śaśāṅka must have waged in the south are unknown to us.

We are more fortunate in respect of the campaigns of Śaśāṅka in Northern India. As his chief adversary was the great emperor Harshavardhana, we get some detailed information of him from Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harsha-charita* and the account of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang.

that Śaśāṅka was the son or nephew of Mahāsenagupta (*BI.* 105) has hardly any basis to stand upon.

<sup>1</sup> This view, propounded by Beveridge (*JASB.* 1893, pp. 315-328), is now generally accepted. Mr. M. Chakravarti, however, did not regard this identification as certain, and suggested that Karpasuvarṇa may be identified with Gauḍa or Lakhanawati [*JASB.* N.S. IV. (1908), pp. 280-81].

<sup>2</sup> Watters, II. 109. For the probable existence of a Bhadra royal dynasty, cf. *IC.* II. 795-97.

<sup>3</sup> Ganjam CP., *EI.* VI. 143 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *JAHRS.* X. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 10-11.

It seems that the 'keynote of Śaśāṅka's foreign policy was to secure his dominions from the aggressive designs of the Maukhari rulers who had for three generations carried on a bitter struggle with the Later Guptas for the possession of Magadha and Gauḍa. The Maukharis had considerably improved their position by an alliance with the powerful rulers of Thaneswar, for the Maukhari king Grahavarman, the son of Avantivarman, had married Rājyaśrī, the daughter of Prabhākaravardhana, the Pushyabhūti ruler of Thaneswar. The Maukharis were also freed from any danger from the side of the Later Guptas. For Mahāsenagupta was probably the maternal uncle of Prabhākaravardhana, and in any case was definitely attached to his cause, as his two sons Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta were sent to the court of Thaneswar to act as companions of the two young princes, Rājyavardhana and Harshavardhana. The prospect of Śaśāṅka was, therefore, gloomy in the extreme. But he was not slow to take advantage of the political situation. It seems that by shrewd diplomacy he succeeded in winning over to his side king Devagupta of Mālava<sup>1</sup> who had evidently taken possession of the dominions of Mahāsenagupta and was naturally hostile to the Thaneswar court for its alliance with the Maukharis, the hereditary enemies of his family. It is probable that Śaśāṅka had gradually extended his authority up to Benares before he decided to strike the final blow.<sup>2</sup> The fatal illness of Prabhākaravardhana gave the allies the required opportunity. The Mālava king defeated and killed Grahavarman and imprisoned his queen Rājyaśrī at Kanauj.<sup>3</sup> His next move was an invasion of Thaneswar itself.<sup>4</sup> As soon as these news reached Thaneswar, Rājyavardhana, who had just ascended the throne on his father's death, marched against Devagupta with a hastily collected army of ten thousand cavalry, leaving his younger brother Harsha in charge of the kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to trace in exact sequence the course of events that rapidly followed. The only facts of which we are certain are that Rājyavardhana defeated Devagupta, the Mālava king, and

<sup>1</sup> This generally accepted view, based on the simultaneous hostile operations of Śaśāṅka and Devagupta against the Maukharis and the Pushyabhūtis, has been challenged by Dr. D. C. Ganguly, who has reconstructed the whole history of the period on an entirely new basis (*IHQ.* xii. 461). But this has been sufficiently refuted by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri (*PHAI.* 4th ed., pp. 513-514).

<sup>2</sup> *MMK.* Ch. 53, p. 634. *MMK(J).* v. 715. *IHI.* p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *HC. Tr.* 173. There is no conclusive evidence that Kanauj was the capital of the Maukharis, but it seems to be the most reasonable assumption on the basis of evidence at present available to us. (cf. *TK.* 32-36).

<sup>4</sup> *HC. Tr.* 173.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 174-76.

captured a large part of his army, but before he could relieve Kanauj, or even establish any contact with his sister Rājyaśrī, the widowed captive Maukhari queen, he was himself killed by Śaśāṅka.<sup>1</sup> While both Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Hiuen Tsang agree that Rājyavardhana was treacherously murdered by or at the instance of Śaśāṅka, they give different accounts of the incident. Again, Harshavardhana's own inscriptions tell us that Rājyavardhana met with his death in the house of his enemy owing to his adherence to a promise (*satyānurodhena*).

Apart from these conflicting versions, it is necessary to remember that the charge of treachery is brought against Śaśāṅka by two persons, Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Hiuen Tsang, whose writings betray a deep personal prejudice, amounting to hatred, against him. Besides, their story, on the face of it, is hardly credible. Hence some scholars are not disposed to accept at their face value the statements of the two contemporary writers about the treachery of Śaśāṅka.

The whole question has been discussed in an appendix to this chapter (see *infra* pp. 71-76) and need not be further dealt with here.

According to Bāṇabhaṭṭa, Rājyavardhana had started with ten thousand cavalry.<sup>2</sup> Of this a part must have been lost in his fight with Devagupta, and a part was sent back with Bhaṇḍi in charge of the captured forces of Mālava. It is, therefore, extremely unlikely that he himself advanced against Śaśāṅka. The probability, rather, is that Śaśāṅka marched forward to help his ally Devagupta, but could not come to his rescue till it was too late. There is hardly any doubt that Śaśāṅka's forces met those of Rājyavardhana. The latter with his reduced forces could hardly offer a successful resistance. Nor is it unlikely, in view of his subsequent conduct, that flushed with his successes, or unaware of Śaśāṅka's approach, Rājyavardhana did not take adequate measures for resisting the new, and perhaps unexpected danger. In any case, it may be safely presumed, on the basis of known facts, that either he was defeated before he died, or that his chances of gaining a victory were very weak, even if contrary to what Bāṇa says, his irrational credulity did not lead to his death at the hands of Śaśāṅka, before the contest was finally decided.

The death of Rājyavardhana in 606 A.D. left Śaśāṅka the master of the situation. But he was prudent enough not to push his successes too far. His main object was accomplished by the complete discomfiture of the Maukharis, and we may presume that his aggressive campaign in the west was at an end.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 175.

As soon as the news of the death of Rājyavardhana reached Harshavardhana, he took a solemn vow to punish Śaśāṅka, and marched with a vast army for taking vengeance upon the king of Gauḍa.<sup>1</sup> On his way he met the messenger of Bhāskaravarman, king of Kāmarūpa, and concluded an alliance with him,<sup>2</sup> presumably against the common enemy, Śaśāṅka. Proceeding still further, he met Bhaṇḍi<sup>3</sup> who told him about the details of Rājyavardhana's murder and of the escape of his sister Rājyaśrī from the prison. Harsha thought it to be his first duty to find out his sister, and leaving the army in charge of Bhaṇḍi, he went out in search of her. After a great deal of difficulty he traced her in the Vindhya forest just in time to save her from an act of self-immolation in fire along with her companions.<sup>4</sup> In the meantime Bhaṇḍi proceeded with the army against the Gauḍa king, and Harsha himself joined it on the bank of the Ganges after rescuing his sister.<sup>5</sup> Of the further progress of his vast army and the development of his "everlasting friendship" with Bhāskaravarman, we possess no definite information, nor are the results of Harsha's diplomatic and military preparations reported by either Bāṇabhaṭṭa or Hiuen Tsang.

The only reference to an actual conflict between Śaśāṅka and Harsha occurs in *Ārya-mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ*.<sup>6</sup> It is a late Buddhist chronicle narrating history, like the Purāṇas, in the guise of prophecies regarding future political events. But the most curious feature of the book is the peculiar way in which it refers to the kings, either by the first letter of the name or by a synonym, but never by the full proper name. While the chronicle has no claim to be treated as historical, it can justly be regarded as a collection of old and genuine traditions preserved in the Buddhist world in the mediaeval age.

There are good grounds for the belief that king 'Soma' mentioned in *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ* refers to Śaśāṅka, both being synonyms of moon. His adversary, 'the king whose name begins with 'Ha,' may be regarded as Harsha. With these assumptions, the following passage<sup>7</sup> may be taken as an interesting reference to the conflict between the two kings:

'At that time will arise in Madhyadeśa the excellent king whose name begins with (the letter) 'Ra' (i.e. Rājyavardhana) of the Vaiśya caste. He will be as

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 187, 191, 206 ff; Watters, I. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *HC. Tr.* 216-223.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 224-225.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 240.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 258.

<sup>6</sup> The text was first edited by T. Ganapati Sastri and subsequently by Mr. Jayaswal in *IHI*.

<sup>7</sup> *IHI*. 50. The number of verses refers to *MMK(J)*; the corresponding verses in *MMK.* are on pp. 634-35.



powerful as Soma (Śaśāṅka). He also ends at the hand of a king of the Nagna caste (vv. 719-720).

'His younger brother Ha (Harshavardhana) will be an unrivalled hero. He decided against the famous Soma. The powerful Vaiśya king with a large army marched against the Eastern Country, against the excellent capital called Puṇḍra of that characterless man. (721-723)....He defeated Soma, the pursuer of wicked deeds; and Soma was forbidden to move out of his country (being ordered) to remain therein (thenceforth) (725). Ha returned having [or not having] been honoured in that kingdom of the barbarian.' (726).

How far the account of Śaśāṅka in *Ārya-mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, which, by the way, is somewhat vague and uncertain,<sup>1</sup> can be regarded as historical, it is difficult to say. It is at best a Buddhist tradition of the type referred to by Hiuen Tsang. It is interesting to note that the stories of Śaśāṅka's oppression against Buddhism, his foul disease, painful death, and going down to hell, as described by Hiuen Tsang are repeated in this Buddhist work. It would, therefore, be extremely unsafe to accept the statements recorded in this book as historical. But even if we assume the correctness of the statement, the net result of the elaborate campaign of Harsha, aided by his eastern ally Bhāskaravarman, king of Kāmarūpa, seems to be that, attacked on two flanks, Śaśāṅka had to fall back on his capital, and his enemies caused damage and destruction in his kingdom. But the enemies had to retire soon leaving him master of his own kingdom.

This view finds some support in a statement of Hiuen Tsang.<sup>2</sup> Referring to Kajaṅgala (near Rajmahal) he says that it ceased to be an independent state centuries ago and its capital was deserted.

"Hence when king Śīlāditya in his progress to 'East India' held his court here, he cut grass to make huts, and burned these when leaving."

This shows that at some unspecified date Harsha led a military campaign as far as the borders of Bengal, but evidently went back without any material success. This may refer to the expedition against Śaśāṅka at the early part of his reign, and to this extent it supports the account of MMK. But it is equally likely that

<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of Dr. R. G. Basak summed up in the following passage seems quite as reasonable as that of Mr. Jayaswal:

"The author here means to say that Harsha defeated Soma (Śaśāṅka)....who was forced to remain confined within his own kingdom, and prevented him from moving further towards the west; and Harsha himself, not being honoured with welcome in these eastern frontier countries returned leisurely to his own kingdom with the satisfaction that he had achieved victory....There is little doubt that as the result of the first campaign Harsha could not establish political supremacy over Gauda." (HNI. 162).

<sup>2</sup> Watters, II. 183.

Hiuen Tsang here refers to the court held by Harsha at Kajaṅgala after his return from the conquest of Koṅgoda in 643 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Further, it is important to note that in his account of Puṇḍravardhana, Hiuen Tsang makes no mention of Harsha's invasion, such as is described in MMK.

But even if it is assumed, on the very doubtful authority of MMK., that Harsha had some success against Śaśāṅka, it must have been very short-lived. For according to Hiuen Tsang's own testimony, Śaśāṅka was in possession of Magadha at the time of his death,<sup>2</sup> which took place shortly before 637-38 A.D. This is confirmed by the statement recorded by Ma-Twan-Lin that Śīlāditya assumed the title of king of Magadha in 641 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

Hiuen Tsang tells us that proceeding eastwards with his army, Harsha invaded the states which had refused allegiance, and waged incessant warfare, until, in six years, he had fought the five Indias.<sup>4</sup> If the implication of this statement is that Harsha subjugated the whole of India, or even Northern India, within six years of his accession i.e. by 612 A.D., the statement hardly deserves any serious consideration. On the other hand, it is not unlikely that Harsha undertook various military campaigns, probably including those against Śaśāṅka, during these six years. But he could not achieve any conspicuous success so far at least as Śaśāṅka was concerned, as the latter was in possession of Gauḍa, Magadha, Utkala and Koṅgoda long after 612 A.D.

Even assuming that Kanauj was the capital of the Maukharis, there is no reason to hold that Harsha's accession to the throne of Kanauj implied any discomfiture of Śaśāṅka. The entire episode about the conquest of Kanauj by Śaśāṅka and his ally Devagupta, as described in Bāṇa's *Harsha-charita*, is rendered somewhat mysterious by the fact that the official genealogy of the Maukhari kings, as recorded in a Nālandā seal,<sup>5</sup> makes it very doubtful whether Grahavarman ever sat on the Maukhari throne. According to Bāṇa, Grahavarman was the eldest son of Avantivarman, and yet the name of the son and successor of Avantivarman in the Nālandā seal, though partly effaced, is certainly not that of Grahavarman.

<sup>1</sup> Beal-Life. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Watters, II. 115. The passage, which has been quoted *infra* p. 66, shows that Śaśāṅka was in possession of Bodhi-Gaya shortly before 637-38 A.D.

<sup>3</sup> IA. IX. (1880), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Watters, I. 343. Hiuen Tsang's further statement that after these six years of warfare Harsha reigned in peace for thirty years without raising a weapon is contradicted by his own statement about campaigns of Harsha against Koṅgoda (Beal-Life. 172).

<sup>5</sup> EI. XXIV. 283.

Bāṇa nowhere says distinctly that Grahavarman was the Maukhari king, but the title 'Deva' applied by him to Grahavarman, and the general tenor of his description certainly imply that Grahavarman had succeeded his father on the Maukhari throne. It is, of course, just possible that Grahavarman's name was omitted in the Nālandā seal as it merely gave a genealogical account and not a list of succession. A more detailed knowledge of the history of the Maukharis would perhaps throw new light on the activities of Śaśāṅka.

All that we know definitely is that Grahavarman was not the last Maukhari king, and a younger son of Avantivarman ruled over the kingdom, presumably after the defeat and death of his elder brother Grahavarman. Harsha's accession to the throne of Kanauj must, therefore, have taken place some years after the death of Grahavarman, and there is thus no reason to suppose that Harshavardhana occupied the kingdom of Kanauj by defeating Śaśāṅka. For it is equally plausible that Śaśāṅka put the younger brother of Grahavarman on the throne of Kanauj, and it was by defeating him at a later period that Harsha ascended the throne of Kanauj. On the whole, making due allowance for the paucity of information at our disposal, and the fact that it is derived mostly from the accounts of hostile and prejudiced writers, we are bound to hold that Śaśāṅka's political and military career was a successful one. Beginning his life as a vassal chief, he made himself master of Gauḍa, Magadha, Utkala and Kōṅgoda, and consolidated his position by defeating the powerful Maukharis. Although this involved him in hostility with two of the most powerful potentates in Northern India *viz.*, the kings of Thaneswar and Kāmarūpa, he held his own against this powerful combination and maintained his extensive dominions till his death.

The date of his death cannot be exactly determined, but it must have taken place after 619 A.D. and before, probably very shortly before, 637 A.D.

While travelling in Magadha in 637-38 A.D. Hiuen Tsang<sup>1</sup> noted that in recent times Śaśāṅka cut down the Bodhi tree at Gayā and ordered the removal of the image of Buddha in a neighbouring temple. On hearing that his order was executed, so runs Hiuen Tsang's account, king Śaśāṅka was seized with terror, his body produced sores and his flesh rotted off, and after a short while he died. This account of Śaśāṅka's death, which is reproduced in MMK.,<sup>2</sup> is undoubtedly inspired by the hatred which the Buddhists felt for him on account of his anti-Buddhistic

<sup>1</sup> Watters, II. 115; Beal-Records. II. 118, 121-22.

<sup>2</sup> MMK. 635. IHI. 50.

activities.<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough, an echo of this tradition is found even in late genealogical works of Bengal Brāhmaṇas.<sup>2</sup> According to the traditions preserved among a section of the Graha-Vipra (also called Śaka-dvīpa) Brāhmaṇas, they are descended from twelve Brāhmaṇas living on the banks of the Sarayū river, who were summoned to treat an incurable disease from which Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauḍa, was suffering. This tradition, however, says that Śaśāṅka was cured and rewarded the Brāhmaṇas who then settled in Bengal.

Hiuen Tsang has recorded numerous acts of oppression perpetrated by Śaśāṅka against the Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> According to him one of the reasons urged by Bodhisattva to induce Harsha to ascend the throne was that he might "then raise Buddhism from the ruin into which it had been brought by the king of Kāṇasuvārṇa."<sup>4</sup> This is, in a way, a confession that Buddhism suffered a great decline on account of the activities of Śaśāṅka. The latter was a devotee of Śiva,<sup>5</sup> and his active patronage of Śaivism might have hastened the process of decline which had already set in in Buddhism. But how far the acts of oppression, charged by Hiuen Tsang against Śaśāṅka, can be regarded as historically true, it is difficult to say. At present, it rests upon the sole evidence of the Buddhist writers who cannot, by any means, be regarded as unbiassed or unprejudiced, at least in any matter which either concerned Śaśāṅka or adversely affected Buddhism.

Indeed, such religious intolerance on the part of a king was so rare in ancient India, that some scholars, who are not disposed altogether to disbelieve the Buddhist stories about Śaśāṅka, have sought to explain away this unusual conduct. They attribute Śaśāṅka's action to political exigencies, on the supposition that the Buddhists in Magadha and other parts of Śaśāṅka's kingdom were in league with the Buddhist emperor Harshavardhana with whom Śaśāṅka was engaged in a prolonged struggle.<sup>6</sup> This is, however,

<sup>1</sup> MMK. also adds 'oppression upon Jainism.'

<sup>2</sup> VJl. iv. 88, 90. *Mahādeva-kārikā* quoted by Umesh Chandra Sarma; *Kulapañji* by Rāmadeva.

<sup>3</sup> Extermination of Buddhism and expulsion of Buddhists from a Vihāra in Kuśinagara (Watters, II. 43); throwing into the Ganges a stone, containing foot-prints of Buddha, in Pāṭaliputra (p. 92); cutting down the Bodhi-tree, destroying its roots down to the water, and burning what remained (p. 115); attempt to remove an image of Buddha and replace it by that of Śiva (p. 116).

<sup>4</sup> Watters, I. 343.

<sup>5</sup> His coins bear the image of Mahādeva on the obverse, Allan, *CCBM*, 147-48. The last incident referred to in f.n. 3 above, also corroborates the view that Śaśāṅka was Śaiva.

<sup>6</sup> B. P. Chanda in *GR*. 13; B. D. Banerji in *BI*. 110-11; *EHBP*. 25.

a pure conjecture, based on similar tendencies displayed by the Buddhists at a later age to sacrifice national for the sake of sectarian interests.<sup>1</sup>

Although sufficient data are not available for forming a correct estimate of the character and achievements of Śaśāṅka, he must be regarded as a great king and a remarkable personality during the first half of the seventh century A.D. He was the first historical ruler of Bengal who not only dreamt imperial dreams, but also succeeded in realising them. He laid the foundations of the imperial fabric in the shape of realised hopes and ideals on which the Pālas built at a later age. He successfully avenged the humiliation inflicted upon his country by the Maukhari rulers, and gave a new turn to that age-long duel between Gauḍa and Kanauj which constitutes an important feature in North Indian politics for more than five hundred years. With friendly biographers like Bāṇa and Hiuen Tsang, he would probably have appeared almost as brilliant as Harshavardhana to posterity. But their undisguised enmity has blackened his name and tarnished his fame. The discovery of fresh evidence alone can enable us to form a just picture of his career and a fair estimate of his character.

<sup>1</sup> According to *Chachnāma* (Eng. trans. by M. K. Fredunbeg, pp. 72, 88ff, 105), the Buddhists of Sind effectively helped the Muslim invaders of that country.

## APPENDIX I.

### THE GUPTA KINGDOM IN BENGAL.

Dr. D. C. Ganguly has propounded the view that "the early home of the Imperial Guptas is to be located in Murshidabad, Bengal, and not in Magadha."<sup>1</sup>

The view is based on the tradition recorded by I-tsing that "Mahārāja Śrī-Gupta built a temple for the Chinese priests and granted twenty-four villages as an endowment for its maintenance. This temple, known as the 'Temple of China,' was situated close to a sanctuary called Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no<sup>2</sup> which was about forty *yojanas* to the east of Nālandā, following the course of the Ganges."<sup>3</sup>

Allan, in opposition to Fleet, proposed to identify this Śrī-Gupta with Mahārāja Gupta who founded the Gupta dynasty and was the grandfather of Chandragupta I. Allan, however, located the temple in Magadha, and took I-tsing's statement to imply that Gupta was in possession of Pāṭaliputra.<sup>4</sup> To Dr. D. C. Ganguly belongs the credit of pointing out that according to the distance and direction given by I-tsing the temple must have been situated in Bengal. From this fact Dr. Ganguly concludes that the original home of the Guptas was in Bengal and not in Magadha.

Dr. Ganguly's view about the location of the temple is strikingly confirmed by a fact which was noted long ago by Foucher, but to which sufficient attention has not been paid by scholars.<sup>5</sup> In an illustrated Cambridge MS. (Add. 1643) dated 1015 A.D., there is a picture of a Stūpa, with the label "Mrigasthāpana-Stūpa of Varendra." Foucher has pointed out that Mrigasthāpana is the Indian original represented by I-tsing's Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no, although Chavannes doubtfully restored it as Mrigaśikhāvana. It would, therefore, follow that the 'Temple of China' was near the Mrigasthāpana Stūpa in Varendra, and must have been situated either in Varendra, or not far from its boundary, on the bank of the Bhāgīrathī or the Padmā.

The statement of I-tsing would thus justify us in holding that one Mahārāja Śrī-Gupta was ruling in Varendra or near it.

<sup>1</sup> *IHQ.* xiv. 532-535.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ganguly inadvertently takes this (Mrigaśikhāvana?) as the temple founded by Mahārāja Gupta (*op. cit.* 532).

<sup>3</sup> Chavannes, *Religieux Eminents* (I-tsing), pp. 82-83. *Beal-Life.* xxxvi.

<sup>4</sup> *CCBM.* xv. xix.

<sup>5</sup> Foucher, *Icon.* 62-63.

Whether he is to be identified with the founder of the Gupta dynasty depends upon the interpretation we put upon the further statement of I-tsing that Mahārāja Śrī-Gupta flourished more than<sup>1</sup> five hundred years before his time. If we interpret it too literally, Gupta must be placed towards the close of the second century A.D., about a hundred years before the founder of the Gupta family. But, as pointed out by Chavannes and Allan, "I-tsing's statement is a vague one and should not be taken too literally." Allan holds that "considering the lapse of time and the fact that the Chinese pilgrim gives the statement on the authority of a tradition handed down from ancient times by old men, there seems no reason to doubt the identification on chronological grounds."<sup>2</sup>

These are undoubtedly forceful arguments and cannot be lightly set aside. Although, therefore, we may not accept Dr. D. C. Ganguly's view 'that the early home of the Imperial Guptas is to be located in Murshidabad, Bengal, and not in Magadha,' it is a valid presumption that parts of Bengal were included in the territory ruled over by the founder of the Gupta family. This presumption, however, cannot be regarded as established historical fact unless further corroborative evidence is forthcoming. For it is solely based on a tradition recorded by a Chinese pilgrim four centuries later, and is opposed to the Purāṇic testimony<sup>3</sup> which includes Prayāga, Sāketa and Magadha, but not any region in Bengal, among the early dominions of the Guptas.

<sup>1</sup> ".....il y a plus de cinq cents années" (Chavannes, *op. cit.* 88).

<sup>2</sup> *CCBM.* xv.

<sup>3</sup> Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, 53, 73

## APPENDIX II

### ŚAŚĀṆKA

A brief review of the facts that may be definitely ascertained about Śaśāṅka has been given above (see *supra* pp. 59-68). We propose here to examine critically and consider in some detail the accounts given in Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harsha-charita* and Hiuen Tsang's *Travels*.

As noted above, Bāṇabhaṭṭa narrates in detail how Harsha rescued his sister and then joined on the bank of the Ganges the large army which he had equipped for punishing Śaśāṅka. It is unfortunate, however, that he brings his narrative to a close at this critical point, leaving us totally in the dark about the encounter between Harsha and Śaśāṅka. What is worse still, some of the most important details even in this incomplete story are left vague and obscure. Bāṇabhaṭṭa, for example, does not care to explain why Rājyaśrī fled to the remote Vindhya forest instead of seeking shelter in her brother's dominions which were much nearer and easier of access. But the more significant, and from our point of view, the more unfortunate, omission on the part of Bāṇa, is in respect of the activities of Śaśāṅka. From the message he puts in the mouth of Samvādaka, a servant of Rājyaśrī, it appears that on the very day on which the death of Prabhākaravardhana was rumoured, Grahavarman was killed, and his queen fettered and confined into prison at Kanauj by the wicked Lord of Mālava.<sup>1</sup>

This account is supplemented by the statement of Bhaṇḍi :

"I learnt from common talk," said he, "that after His Majesty Rājyavardhana was taken to paradise and Kānyakubja was seized by the man named Gupta, queen Rājyaśrī burst from her confinement and with her train entered the Vindhya forest."<sup>2</sup>

Later, the attendants of Rājyaśrī told Harsha the

"full story of his sister's misfortunes from her imprisonment onward,—how she was sent away from Kānyakubja, from her confinement there during the Gauda trouble, through the action of a noble man named Gupta,—how she heard the news of Rājyavardhana's death, and refused to take food, and then how, faint for want of food, she wandered miserably in the Vindhya forests, and at last in her despair resolved to mount the funeral pile."<sup>3</sup>

It is surprising that Bāṇabhaṭṭa did not notice the apparent inconsistencies between the three versions of the same story.

<sup>1</sup> HC. Tr. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 224.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 250.



According to Samvāḍaka, Kanauj was captured by the Lord of Mālava (Devagupta) and perhaps the same king is referred to as Gupta by Bhaṇḍi. But the attendants ascribe the imprisonment of Rājyaśrī to 'Gauḍa trouble.' Further, whereas, according to Bhaṇḍi, Rājyaśrī *burst from her confinement*, presumably by eluding or in defiance of Gupta who had seized Kanauj, the attendants ascribe her release to the kind action of a noble man named Gupta. On the important question whether this Gupta is identical with the Gupta of Bhaṇḍi, Bāṇabhaṭṭa is distressingly silent.

Bhaṇḍi's statement, being admittedly based on common talk, is less reliable than the versions of the servant and attendants of Rājyaśrī who were eye-witnesses to the event. We may thus reasonably infer that shortly after Devagupta had captured Kanauj by defeating and killing Grahavarman, Śaśāṅka marched to the help of his ally and reached Kanauj. In the meantime, Devagupta, intoxicated with his recent success, proceeded towards Thaneshwar without waiting for the arrival of his ally Śaśāṅka, and met with his doom. It is evident, however, that Śaśāṅka still retained his hold on Kanauj, and Rājyavardhana had an encounter with him. Bāṇabhaṭṭa does not give any details about the subsequent movements of these two adversaries, but merely states that Rājyavardhana "had been allured to confidence by false civilities on the part of the king of Gauḍa, and then, weaponless, confiding, and alone, despatched in his own quarters"<sup>1</sup> What the exact allurements were, and why the king was foolish enough to enter into the enemy's camp without proper escort or safeguard, Bāṇabhaṭṭa does not care to explain.

Hiuen Tsang, the other contemporary writer, is equally vague and obscure on this point. He tells us that Śaśāṅka frequently told his ministers, with reference to Rājyavardhana, "that if a frontier country has a virtuous ruler, this is the unhappiness of the mother kingdom," and then adds, "on this they (*i.e.* the ministers) asked the king to a conference and murdered him." Later, Hiuen Tsang quotes the following speech of Harsha's ministers: "Owing to the fault of his (Rājyavardhana's) ministers, he was led to subject his person to the hand of his enemy, and the kingdom has suffered a great affliction; but it is the fault of your ministers."<sup>2</sup> This is hardly consistent with Bāṇa's version,<sup>3</sup> for no heedless act

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Beal-Records*, i. 210-11.

<sup>3</sup> St. Julien's translation of the above passage, which is more decisive on this point, runs as follows (*JA.* 1878, p. 197): "But by the incapacity of his (Rājyavardhana's) ministers he has gone and fallen under the sword of his enemy; that has been a great disgrace to the realm. It is we who are to blame."

of the king under the influence of temptation or allurements, but a deliberate plan (or conspiracy?) of the ministers was responsible for the course of events which ultimately put Rājyavardhana in the clutches of his enemy. Besides, emphasis is laid here on the fault of the ministers and not on any treacherous act of Śaśāṅka. To these two contemporary accounts we have to add a third, viz., the statement contained in the inscriptions<sup>1</sup> of Harsha that Rājyavardhana gave up his life at the house of his enemy owing to his adherence to a promise (*satyānurodhena*).

On the basis of the above accounts, historians are generally agreed that Śaśāṅka treacherously murdered Rājyavardhana. Mr. R. P. Chanda<sup>2</sup> was the first to challenge the accuracy of the view and gave cogent reasons to show that Rājyavardhana was either defeated and taken prisoner or surrendered to Śaśāṅka. Mr. R. D. Banerji<sup>3</sup> and the present writer<sup>4</sup> also supported Mr. Chanda. This view is, however, opposed by Dr. R. G. Basak<sup>5</sup> and Dr. D. C. Ganguly<sup>6</sup> who have reiterated the old theory of Śaśāṅka's treachery.

This controversy is not likely to be closed until fresh evidence enables us to reach definite conclusions. In the meantime, the arguments on both sides may be summed up to enable the reader to form his own judgment.

The main argument adduced by Dr. Basak and Dr. Ganguly is the agreement between the contemporary sources. But it may be pointed out, that while Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Hiuen Tsang agree that Rājyavardhana was murdered in a treacherous manner, the two authorities differ in essential details, and further the third contemporary source, the inscriptions of Harsha, and one version of Hiuen Tsang make no allusion to treachery at all. Curiously enough, all these accounts are characterised by a deliberate vagueness and obscurity which is difficult to account for.

Following the ordinary canons of criticism the charges of Bāṇa and Hiuen Tsang against Śaśāṅka must be accepted with a great deal of reserve. Both were prejudiced against him on account of his hostility against their patron, and Hiuen Tsang made no secret of his wrath against Śaśāṅka for his anti-Buddhist activities. That Hiuen Tsang was ready, nay almost glad, to believe anything discreditable to Śaśāṅka, is abundantly clear from the various stories he has recorded of Śaśāṅka's persecution of Buddhism, and his ignoble death.<sup>7</sup> The attitude of Bāṇa is also quite clear from the

<sup>1</sup> *EL*. IV. 210; I. 67.      <sup>2</sup> *GR*. 8 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *JHBR*. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *HNI*. 144 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *BI*. 107.

<sup>6</sup> *IHQ*. XII. 402 ff.

<sup>7</sup> These have been referred to *supra* p. 67, f.n. 3.

contemptuous epithets like *Gauḍādharma* and *Gauḍabhujāṅga* by which he refers to Śaśāṅka.

Such witnesses would be suspect even if their stories were complete, rational, and consistent. But unfortunately both the stories are so vague and involve such an abnormal element as would not be believed except on the strongest evidence. Hiuen Tsang does not refer to any ill feeling or hostility between Śaśāṅka and Rājyavardhana, nor even any conflict of interests. Nothing but pure jealousy at Rājyavardhana's virtue prompts Śaśāṅka to incite his ministers to murder him. Apart from the irrational character of the whole story, it is sufficiently refuted by the fact that according to Bāṇa, Rājyavardhana's rule was so short that Śaśāṅka could have hardly any opportunity to be deeply impressed by his virtue, and "frequently" addressed his ministers on that subject.

The story of Bāṇabhaṭṭa presupposes that although Rājyavardhana was out to fight with Śaśāṅka, who was his mortal enemy and in occupation of Kanauj where Rājyaśrī was still kept in prison, he could be tempted to meet his adversary, alone and without any weapon. The story is neither rational nor complete, for Bāṇabhaṭṭa does not even care to mention the nature of allurements which might explain or excuse such an unusual step taken by Rājyavardhana. Dr. R. G. Basak tries to cover this vital defect by assuming that neither Harsha nor Bhaṇḍi knew clearly about the allurement offered by Śaśāṅka to Rājya,<sup>1</sup> and Bāṇa had special reason to conceal the details. How Bāṇa came to know what was unknown to both Harsha and Bhaṇḍi, Dr. Basak does not tell us. Nor does he explain how Śaṅkara, the commentator of Bāṇa, who flourished centuries later,<sup>2</sup> knew the details of the story though they were not recorded by Bāṇa. It seems that, in this particular case, contrary to the ordinary principle, the accurate knowledge of the details of an event grows in proportion to the lapse of time.

According to Śaṅkara,<sup>3</sup> Śaśāṅka enticed Rājyavardhana through a spy by the offer of his daughter's hand, and while the unlucky king with his retinue was participating in a dinner in his enemy's camp he was killed by the Gauḍa king in disguise. This story is hardly consistent with Bāṇa's account that Rājyavardhana was alone and defenceless when he was killed in his enemy's house.

<sup>1</sup> HNI. 148. But it is said in *Harsha-charita* that when Harsha met Bhaṇḍi, "he enquired the facts of his brother's death, and Bhaṇḍi related the whole story in full." (HC. Tr. 224).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ganguly places Śaṅkara in the 14th century A.D. IHQ. XII. 462.

<sup>3</sup> HNI. 149.

Dr. Basak, oblivious of this inconsistency, accepts the story as correct and remarks, "It is quite plausible, that during a period of truce the offer of the hand of his daughter to Rājyavardhana was made by Śaśāṅka, and lest Rājyavardhana's heedless compliance with such an invitation sent through a messenger should tarnish the reputation of the king, Bāṇa refrained from giving full details of this incident in his book."<sup>1</sup>

Bāṇa could not have such a story in view, for it is inconsistent with his own account, and there appears to be no valid reason for suppressing it.

The above analysis would show that there are legitimate grounds for doubting the accuracy of the story. Dr. D. C. Ganguly observes that "there is no warrant for thinking that Bāṇa and Hiuen Tsang blackened the character of Śaśāṅka with accusations knowing them to be false."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately such instances are not rare. References to Sirāj-ud-daulā, Napoleon and Tipu Sultan by contemporary English writers, and the contradictory versions of the encounter between Shivaji and Afzal well illustrate the unwillingness or incapacity of hostile writers to give impartial account of dreaded foes. The last instance perhaps furnishes an apt parallel to the Śaśāṅka-Rājyavardhana incident. The Mahratta and Muslim writers accuse respectively Afzal and Shivaji of treachery. In the present instance we have only the version of Kanauij. The Bengali version might have painted the scene in an altogether different way. For the present we can accept the statement in Harsha's inscriptions that Rājyavardhana gave up his life, in his enemy's house, where he went for the sake of a promise, or, as Dr. Basak puts it, to keep his word of honour. That this enemy was Śaśāṅka also admits of little doubt. Further details of this incident may be revealed some day by the discovery of fresh evidence, but until then the modern historians might well suspend their judgment and at least refrain from accusing Śaśāṅka of treachery, a charge not brought against him even by the brother of the murdered. It may also be emphasised that even Buddhist traditions were not unanimous in respect of the treachery of Śaśāṅka. For according to the generally accepted interpretation of MMK., Rājyavardhana was murdered, not by Śaśāṅka, but by a king of the Naga caste.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that Hiuen Tsang's emphasis upon the fault of the ministers in respect of Rājyavardhana's death becomes very significant when we remember that Rājyavardhana was a Buddhist and his ministers were most

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *IHQ.* xii. 463.

<sup>3</sup> *IHI.* 50.

probably orthodox Hindus. Hiuen Tsang refers to an attempt on Harsha's life by the non-Buddhists.<sup>1</sup> Who knows that Rājyavardhana's death was not similarly encompassed by his ministers with the help of Śaśāṅka who was known to be a great champion of orthodox faith? This is, of course, a mere hypothesis, which lacks convincing evidence, but it would explain the mysterious vagueness of the contemporary authorities and prove that there might be other explanations of Rājyavardhana's death than the treachery of Śaśāṅka.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Beal-*Records*. i. 220-21.

<sup>2</sup> An apt illustration is furnished by the capture of the Roman emperor Valerian by the Persian king Shapur in A.D. 260. It is generally held that in course of negotiations for peace, "the Persian king expressed his desire for a personal interview; the emperor agreed; in fatal confidence he met the Persian king and was taken prisoner." The following comment is made in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Vol. XII, p. 135) on this episode: "On the fact of the capture our sources are in complete accord, but they disagree in their accounts of the manner in which it was effected. While Zosimus represents it as a treacherous breach of faith on the part of Shapur, others would place it after a battle with insufficient forces against the superior strength of the enemy, others again—and this must certainly be false—will have it that Valerian had fled from beleaguered Edessa to the Persian King in face of a mutiny of his own starving soldiers."

## CHAPTER V

### POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION AFTER ŚAŚĀṆKA.

#### I. KINGDOM OF GAUḌA

THE death of Śaśāṅka proved to be a political disaster of the first magnitude. Not only were the dreams of a far-flung Gauḍa empire rudely shattered, but within a few years his kingdom, including the capital city Karnasuvarṇa, passed into the hands of Bhāskaravarman, the hostile king of Kāmarūpa. The events that led to this complete collapse are not known, and only a few facts of this obscure period in the history of Bengal may be gleaned from the documents at present available to us.

Hiuen Tsang who travelled in Bengal about 638 A.D., shortly after the death of Śaśāṅka, mentions, besides Kajāṅgala (territory round Rajmahal), four kingdoms in Bengal proper, viz., Puṇḍravardhana, Karnasuvarṇa, Samatāṭa, and Tāmralipti.<sup>1</sup> The first two undoubtedly denote the two component parts of Śaśāṅka's kingdom viz., North Bengal and northern parts of Western Bengal including Burdwan, Birbhum, Murshidabad, and Nadia districts. Hiuen Tsang refers to the capital of each of the kingdoms mentioned by him, but does not say anything of their kings and gives no indication of their political status. This silence has led some scholars to think that they were included within the empires of Harshavardhana.<sup>2</sup> But this assumption is not supported either by the general tenor of Hiuen Tsang's description or by any facts known so far.

It is obvious from Hiuen Tsang's account that Śaśāṅka's death loosened the bonds which united North and West Bengal, and these formed separate kingdoms in 638 A.D. Within a few years both

<sup>1</sup> Watters, II. 182-193. Beal-Records. II. 193-204.

<sup>2</sup> The fallacy of this view has been pointed out in *JBORS.* IX. 312 ff. and *IHQ.* XV. 122. But Dr. R. G. Basak repeats the same and even improves upon it. "The reason," says he, "for Yuan Chwang not mentioning the name of any king ruling in any of the four or five political divisions of Bengal at that period may be sought in the fact that when he visited (in 643 A.D.) these countries and also Kāmarūpa, he found most of them included in Harsha's own dominion, and some in that of Bhāskaravarman (italics is ours)," *HNI.* 227. It may be mentioned in passing that Hiuen Tsang visited Bengal about 638 A.D. and not 643 A.D. as stated above (Watters, II. 335). Mr. Tripathi has merely echoed the old view without any fresh argument (*TK. Chs.* IV-V; *JBORS.* XVIII. 296 ff.).

these kingdoms were conquered by Bhāskaravarman. The fact that Bhāskaravarman made a grant from the victorious camp at Karnaśuvārṇa<sup>1</sup> shows that he even succeeded in seizing the capital city of Śaśāṅka.

This may also be indirectly concluded from some incidents referred to in the *Life* of Hiuen Tsang. It is recorded there that some time about 642 A.D., Bhāskaravarman proceeded with his army of elephants, 20,000 in number, to meet Harsha at Kajaṅgala near Rajmahal, and his 30,000 ships passed along the Ganges to the same destination.<sup>2</sup> This evidently implies an effective suzerainty of the king of Kāmarūpa over the former dominions of Śaśāṅka.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that, according to the *Life* of Hiuen Tsang, at the time of this meeting Harsha himself had just returned from his victorious campaign in Koṅgoda,<sup>4</sup> the kingdom of the Śailodbhavas who formerly acknowledged the suzerainty of Śaśāṅka.

Now Hiuen Tsang's account, as preserved in his *Records*, does not refer to Puṇḍravardhana and Karnaśuvārṇa as subject to Bhāskaravarman, and as regards Koṅgoda, it even goes so far as to say that its soldiers "rule by force the neighbouring provinces, so that no one can resist them."<sup>5</sup> It would thus appear that the dominions of Śaśāṅka in and outside Bengal proper were conquered respectively by Bhāskaravarman and Harsha some time between 638 and 642 A.D. The only exception was Magadha which evidently passed into the hands of one Pūrṇavarman, described as last of the race of Aśokarāja, at the time when Hiuen Tsang visited

<sup>1</sup> Nidhanpur cp. (*ET.* XII. 65; XIX. 115).

<sup>2</sup> Beal-*Life*. 172.

<sup>3</sup> This point was emphasised for the first time by Dr. D. C. Ganguly (*IHQ.* xv. 122 ff). It should be remembered, however, that the passage of Bhāskara's army and ships can also be explained by the assumption of Harsha's suzerainty over Bengal. Bhāskara's conquest of Bengal is assumed on the authority of Nidhanpur cp., but it is equally probable that after Śaśāṅka's death his dominions both in Bengal and Orissa were conquered by Harsha. The turmoil following the death of Harsha might have enabled Bhāskaravarman to conquer Bengal and pitch his victorious camp at Karnaśuvārṇa. In any case, he must have occupied Bengal by 648 A.D. when he is referred to as king of Eastern India in Chinese annals in connection with the expedition of Wang-hiuen-tse. This view has been fully developed in my *Outlines of Anc. Ind. Hist. and Civilisation*, p. 348. For other views on the subject, cf. *HNI.* 225-229. It is difficult to accept Dr. Basak's suggestion that Bhāskaravarman never conquered Karnaśuvārṇa, but merely pitched his temporary camp there, as an ally of Harsha during the latter's second campaign (*HNI.* 226-29). It would have been highly impolitic, to say the least of it, on the part of Bhāskaravarman to issue a formal royal edict from a place which belonged not to him but to a mighty king like Harsha. Further, as noted above, he is definitely referred to as king of Eastern India in the Chinese annals.

<sup>4</sup> Beal-*Life*. 172.

<sup>5</sup> Beal-*Records.* II. 307.

it about 637-38 A.D.<sup>1</sup> But in or about 641 A.D. it was conquered by Harshavardhana.<sup>2</sup> Kajaṅgala also was presumably conquered by Harsha.

Thus the available evidences seem to indicate that the death of Śaśāṅka was followed by a disruption of his vast dominions and its component parts formed separate independent states. This gave the required opportunity<sup>3</sup> to his life-long enemies Bhāskaravarman and Harshavardhana who conquered respectively his former dominions in and outside Bengal.

The political disintegration of the Gauḍa empire after the death of Śaśāṅka seems to be referred to in that curious Buddhist work *Ārya-mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* mentioned above. The relevant passage has been translated as follows by Mr. Jayaswal :

"After the death of Soma the Gauḍa political system (*Gauḍa-tantra*) was reduced to mutual distrust, raised weapons and mutual jealousy—one (king) for a week; another for a month; then a republican constitution—such will be the daily (condition) of the country on the bank of the Ganges where houses were built on the ruins of monasteries. Thereafter Soma's (Śaśāṅka's) son Mānava will last for 8 months 5 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ?) days."<sup>4</sup>

This English rendering of the relevant passage by Mr. Jayaswal cannot be regarded as free from doubts, particularly as the reference to a republican constitution is based on an emendation of the text. But it undoubtedly conveys the general sense of the text.

The passage immediately following the above extract in MMK. almost undoubtedly refers to a king Jayanāga of Gauḍa,<sup>5</sup> and there is equally little doubt that he is to be identified with the king of that name whose coins have been found in Western Bengal,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

<sup>2</sup> This may be inferred from the following statement by Ma-Twan-Lin: "In the fifteenth year of the Ching-Kiwan Period (641 A.D.) Śilāditya assumed the title of king of Mo-kie-tho (Magadha) and sent an ambassador with a letter to the emperor" [*IA.* ix. (1880) 19].

<sup>3</sup> It must be emphasised, that apart from conjectures based on pre-conceived notions about Harsha's military exploits, and inferences based on doubtful evidences of negative character, the only two positive references to Harsha's conquests in Eastern India are those of Magadha in 641 A.D., and Kōṅgoda the following year (apart from a temporary court held at Kajaṅgala referred to *supra* p. 78). The reasonable presumption, therefore, is that Harsha led victorious campaign in these regions after, and not before, Śaśāṅka's death.

<sup>4</sup> *IHI.* 51. The word *Gaṇajya* has been emended to *gaṇarājya*.

<sup>5</sup> *Nāgarāja-samāhveyo Gauḍa-rājā bhaviṣhyati*

*ante tasya nṛipe tiṣṭham jayādya-varṇatadviṣau* || MMK. p. 636.

Jayaswal reads 'Nagārāja' in place of Nāgarāja [MMK(J). v. 750] and takes Nāgarāja to be the name of the king and regards him as belonging to the Bhāraṣiva dynasty (*IHI.* 51).

<sup>6</sup> For Jayanāga's coins cf. Allan, *CCBM.* LXI, civ., 150-51. The coins bear



and who issued a land-grant from the victorious camp of Karpasuvārṇa, the capital of Śaśāṅka.<sup>1</sup>

Although the tradition recorded in MMK. cannot be regarded by itself as historical, it is corroborated in the present instance by known facts. The general picture of anarchy, confusion, and political disintegration is fully confirmed by the conquests of Harsha and Bhāskaravarman, and merely supplies the details of a presumption to which they inevitably lead. The reference to Jayanāga is also corroborated, as noted above, by coins and inscription of a king named Jayanāga who ruled with Karpasuvārṇa as capital.

The date of Jayanāga cannot be ascertained with precision, but judging from his coins and inscription, he may be placed within the period 550-650 A.D. On the basis of the tradition recorded in MMK., we may hold that after the anarchy and confusion caused by the invasion of Bhāskaravarman had subsided, and a son of Śaśāṅka had vainly tried to re-establish the fortunes of his family, the kingdom passed into the hands of Jayanāga.<sup>2</sup> He is styled Mahārājādhirāja and was evidently a ruler of some authority. He ruled over Birbhum and Murshidabad districts, but the extent of his kingdom or any other detail of his reign is not known to us.

For more than a century after this the history of Gauda is obscure in the extreme. This period which extends roughly from 650 to 750 A.D. was marked at the beginning by political chaos and confusion in Eastern India caused by the death of Harsha (646 or 647 A.D.), the usurpation of his kingdom by his minister, and the strange military adventures of the Chinese envoy Wang-hiuen-tse.<sup>3</sup>

But the success of the Chinese arms brought into prominence

the name *Jaya* and there is no doubt now that they were issued by Jayanāga (EI. xviii. 62).

<sup>1</sup> Vappaghoshavāṭa Grant (EI. xviii. 60 ff), or Malliya Grant (ABORI. xix. 81). It records a grant of land situated in Audumbarika-*vishaya* which has been identified with Audambar *Pargana* mentioned in *Ain-i-Akbari*. It comprised the greater part of Birbhum and a part of the Murshidabad district (EI. xix. 286-87). Sāmanta Nārāyaṇabhadra was the ruler of this *vishaya* at the time of the grant.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. R. G. Basak writes: "The *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ* makes Jayanāga almost a successor of Śaśāṅka, but in our opinion, he and his son (stated to have reigned for a few months only) preceded Śaśāṅka as kings of Karpasuvārṇa" (HNI. 140). Dr. Basak gives no reason, and in the absence of more reliable evidence or cogent arguments to the contrary, it is better to accept the tradition recorded in MMK. Dr. Basak refers to a son of Jayanāga, but MMK. refers to the son of Śaśāṅka, and not of Jayanāga, as having ruled for eight months and five days. It is just possible that Jayanāga ruled after the death of Śaśāṅka and before the conquest of Karpasuvārṇa by Bhāskaravarman.

<sup>3</sup> This has been dealt with in detail *infra* p. 92.

a new factor in North Indian politics. The powerful king of Tibet, Srong-tsan Gampo, who exercised suzerainty over Nepal and had sent military assistance to the Chinese in their hour of need, is credited with extensive conquests in India. There is no reliable record of his exploits, but he is said to have conquered Assam and gradually made himself master of nearly the half of India.<sup>1</sup> In spite of obvious exaggerations the claims were probably not without some basis. We have definite evidence that the dynasty of Bhaskaravarman was overthrown not long after his death by a Mlechchha ruler.<sup>2</sup> It is also not improbable that the Khadga kings who ruled over parts of Bengal in the seventh century A.D. came in the train of the Tibetan invasion,<sup>3</sup> though of this we have no definite evidence. Although the Tibetan supremacy was short-lived and Indian states threw off the suzerainty of Tibet about 702 A.D.,<sup>4</sup> the menace of Tibetan invasion probably played an important part in Indian politics.

Another important political factor was the re-establishment of the Later Gupta power in Magadha. That this province was included for a short time in the empire of Harsha admits of no doubt.<sup>5</sup> But not long after his death it came into the possession of Ādityasena. He and his three successors ruled over this kingdom in the latter half of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century A.D.<sup>6</sup> They all assumed imperial titles and were evidently very powerful rulers. Some scholars hold that Bengal, or at least a large part of it, was included in their empire,<sup>7</sup> but we have no reliable evidence of any kind to support this view.

<sup>1</sup> Lévi-Nepal. II. 174. See also *infra* pp. 91-93.

<sup>2</sup> *DIINI*. I. 239.

<sup>3</sup> *EHBR*. 24. It must be noted, however, that important persons with the title Khadgi are mentioned in Mallasarul Ins. (6th cent. A.D.) (*EI*. XXIII. 159).

<sup>4</sup> Lévi-Nepal. II. 174-75.

<sup>5</sup> See *supra* p. 70, f.n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The history of Ādityasena and his successors, Devagupta, Vishnugupta and Jivitagupta II is known from six inscriptions (*CII*. III. Nos. 42-46 and Vaidyanātha Temple Ins. at Deoghar, *CII*. III. p. 213 f.n.). All the four kings bear imperial titles *viz.*, Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahārājādhirāja. All their records have been found in Bihar. No. 46 is issued from the Jayaskandhāvāra of Gomatikotṭaka and Fleet suggests that it was on the bank of the river Gomati. This is, however, by no means certain. The only other evidence of their rule outside Bihar is furnished by the Vaidyanātha Temple Ins. of which no facsimile is published, and which was written in Maithila character (*JASB*. LII. 190-91). It says that Ādityasena, having arrived from the Chola city, performed three Āśvamedha and other sacrifices. Dr H. C. Raychaudhuri thinks that these Later Gupta kings are referred to as Lords of the whole of Uttarā-patha (*saka-ottarā-patha-nātha*) (*PIAI*. 4th ed., pp. 516-17). No 43 gives the date 66 for Ādityasena, which, referred to Harsha Era, would be equivalent to 672 A.D. Ādityasena and his three successors may thus be placed approximately between 650 and 725 A.D.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. R. G. Basak thinks that 'Bengal, specially the Southern Rāḍha and Vaṅga' probably formed parts of Ādityasena's dominions as he extended his

We learn from an inscription<sup>1</sup> of a king of the Śaila dynasty named Jayavardhana that the brother of his great-grandfather defeated the Paṇḍra king and conquered his dominions. According to this record the Śaila dynasty had a remarkable history. Their original home was in the valley of the Himālayas, but they conquered the Gurjara country. Later, they spread to the east and ultimately three branches of the family established themselves at Kāśi, the Vindhya region, and Paṇḍra. It is said that the two chiefs who conquered Kāśi and Paṇḍra were brothers, and the son of the former became the lord of the Vindhya regions.

The Paṇḍra kingdom, conquered by the Śailas, has been identified by all scholars with Northern Bengal, on the ground that this region was known as both Puṇḍra and Paṇḍra.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, no details of the Śaila rule in Bengal are known to us. The conquest probably took place about 725 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

The next important event in the history of Bengal is the defeat and death of the king of Gauḍa at the hands of Yaśovarman, the king of Kanauj, who undertook a military expedition all over Northern India to establish his position as Lord Paramount like Harshavardhana and Yaśodharman. The date of Yaśovarman's conquests may be approximately fixed between 725 and 735 A.D. He evidently regarded the Lord of Gauḍa as one of his chief adversaries, and his success against the latter has obtained great prominence on account of the title of a famous poetic work *Gauḍa-vaho* ('Slaying of the King of Gauḍa') by his court-poet Vākpatirāja.<sup>4</sup> Curiously enough, the poem itself, consisting of 1209 verses, refers only once (v. 1194), very incidentally, to the slaying of the Gauḍa king, while five verses (vv. 354, 414-417) refer to the Lord of Magadha. The latter fled before Yaśovarman in the Vindhya region (v. 354), but the other kings who accompanied him immediately returned to fight (v. 414). After describing the battle in two verses (vv. 415, 416), the poet simply says that Yaśovarman, having slain the king of the Magadhas, who was fleeing, proceeded to the sea-shore (v. 417).

It has been assumed that the Lord of Gauḍa and Lord of Magadha, mentioned by Vākpati, were one and the same person.

conquests towards the shores of the ocean (*HNI*. 128). He evidently relies on the statement in the Vaidyanātha Temple Ins. that Ādityasena conquered the whole earth upto the shore of the four oceans. But such praises are too conventional to be regarded seriously. Nor can we infer the supremacy of the Later Guptas in Bengal from the very hypothetical proposition that they were Lords of Uttarāpatha (see *supra* p. 81, f.n. 6).

<sup>1</sup> Ragholi cp. (*El.* ix. 41).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Belava cp. I. 27. *BI.* 20.      <sup>3</sup> *DHNI*. i. 276.

<sup>4</sup> *Gauḍa-vaho*, edited by Śaṅkar Pāṇḍurang Paṇḍit (Bombay, 1887).

The assumption has led to a further one *viz.* that Gauḍa was subject to the Later Gupta kings of Magadha. But even if the first assumption be correct, the second does not necessarily follow. The emphasis laid on Gauḍa in the very title of the poem would rather lead to the inference that Magadha was subject to the king of Gauḍa.<sup>1</sup> But all these assumptions must be regarded as purely provisional on account of the obscurity of the poem *Gauḍa-vaho* which has been discussed in detail in Appendix II.

Yaśovarman followed up his victory against Gauḍa by the conquest of Vaṅga. Thus nearly the whole of modern Bengal passed into his hands. The nature of his rule is not known to us, but it could not have been of long duration. For the promising career of Yaśovarman was cut short by the disastrous defeat inflicted upon him by Lalitāditya, the king of Kashmir, before the close of the first half of the eighth century A.D., and probably not long after 736 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Lalitāditya naturally regarded himself as the overlord of the various states which had acknowledged the suzerainty of Yaśovarman. Presumably to enforce this claim, he undertook a *digvijaya* or an expedition of conquest. According to Kalhaṇa's account his victorious campaign not only led him across the whole of Northern India right up to Kalinga, but also over the whole of Southern India up to the river Kāverī and the Malaya mountains. To what extent this may be regarded as historically true it is difficult to say. As regards Bengal, with which alone we are here concerned, there is no direct reference in Kalhaṇa's account that Lalitāditya invaded, far less conquered, any part of the province. But two incidents reported by Kalhaṇa lead to the presumption that the kingdom of Gauḍa acknowledged his suzerainty.

In the first place, we are told that a troop of elephants from Gauḍa-maṇḍala joined Lalitāditya,<sup>3</sup> and it is only reasonable to conclude that the king of Gauḍa acknowledged the suzerainty of Lalitāditya and sent his elephant troops to help him. Secondly, Kalhaṇa relates how the king of Gauḍa was forced to visit Kashmir

<sup>1</sup> The conquest of Magadha is perhaps to be credited to the Śaila rulers of Northern Bengal. As noted above, two other branches of this family ruled in Vindhya region and Benares, and this circumstance must have helped the Śaila ruler of Bengal to wrest the supremacy of Magadha, probably from Jivitagupta II, the last known ruler of the Later Guptas, who reigned in the first half of the eighth century A.D.

<sup>2</sup> For different views, cf. *Gauḍa-vaho*, 2nd ed., pp. ccviff.

<sup>3</sup> *RT.* iv. 148. Dr. H. C. Ray states that Lalitāditya "reached the Gauḍa land" (*DEHI.* i. 277). This is, however, by no means certain, though very probable. In any case *RT.* does not refer to Lalitāditya's march to Gauḍa.

at the behest of Lalitāditya, and was murdered there<sup>1</sup> The Gauda king had evidently some fear about his safety, and to remove it, Lalitāditya swore by an image of Vishṇu that no violence would be done to his person. In spite of this guarantee Lalitāditya caused the Gauda king to be murdered at a place called Trigrāmi. Here, again, the distant journey undertaken by the Gauda king, in spite of misgivings about his own safety, can be reasonably explained only on the supposition that he acknowledged the suzerainty of Lalitāditya.

The sequel to the murder of the king of Gauda is interesting enough to be recorded here. Kalhaṇa relates how some loyal and faithful followers of the Gauda king took a solemn vow to avenge the foul murder, made the long journey from Gauda to Kashmir in the guise of pilgrims, and attacked the temple which contained the Vishṇu image by which Lalitāditya swore the safety of the Gauda king. With a full knowledge of certain death, these people entered the temple and broke one of the two images found there, unhappily the wrong one. In the meantime, soldiers came from the capital and cut all the Gaudas to pieces. The Kashmirian poet has paid the highest tribute to the loyalty and devotion of these people. "Even the creator," says he, "cannot achieve what the Gaudas did on that occasion," and "to this day the world is filled with the fame of the Gauda heroes."<sup>2</sup> The story, romantic though it is, is probably true, for otherwise Kalhaṇa would not have reported it, knowing fully how thoroughly it discredits his ideal king Lalitāditya.

Same reliance, however, cannot be placed on another romantic story recorded by Kalhaṇa about Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Lalitāditya. But though its historical character may well be doubted, a brief account of the curious episode may be given for what it is worth.

Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Lalitāditya, set out with a vast army for conquering the world, in imitation of his grandfather. But his kingdom was usurped, during his absence, by his brother-in-law Jajja, and he was deserted by his army. Ultimately he dismissed all his soldiers and wandered alone. In course of this romantic enterprise, he entered the city of Paundravardhana which was then ruled by a prince called Jayanta, as a subordinate chief to the kings of Gauda. He married Jayanta's daughter, defeated the five Gauda chiefs and made his father-in-law their overlord.<sup>3</sup>

It is difficult to say what amount of truth, if any, there is in

<sup>1</sup> RT. IV. 323-30.

<sup>2</sup> RT. IV. 332, 335.

<sup>3</sup> RT. IV. 402-468.

this story. But the reference to five Gauḍa kings indicates a state of political disintegration which is supported by other evidences. It appears very likely that Gauḍa became a field of struggle for supremacy among a number of local chiefs who had asserted their independence as there was no central authority to keep them under control.

Another reference to a foreign conquest of Gauḍa, about this period, occurs in an inscription of Jayadeva II, the Lichchhavi king of Nepal. In this record, dated 759 or 748 A.D., the king's father-in-law, Harsha of the Bhagadatta dynasty, is described as the lord of Gauḍa, Uḍra, Kaliṅga and Kośala.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the rulers of Kāmarūpa claimed descent from Bhagadatta has led to the presumption that Harsha was ruler of Kāmarūpa.<sup>2</sup> We must remember, however, that the Kara dynasty of Orissa also claimed descent from the same family,<sup>3</sup> and it is equally probable that Harsha belonged to that dynasty. In any case we have no independent evidence about the possession of Gauḍa by any ruler of either Kāmarūpa or Orissa, and it is difficult to say how far the assumption of the title 'lord of Gauḍa' was justified by actual exercise of authority in that kingdom.

## II. KINGDOM OF VAṅGA

We have no definite information about the political condition of Vaṅga during the reign of Śaśāṅka. But even if it were incorporated in his dominions, it must have again formed an independent state shortly after his death. Hiuen Tsang has referred to the kingdom of Samatāṭa, which seems to have included the major part, if not the whole, of Vaṅga proper.<sup>4</sup> How long the independent kingdom established in this region by Gopachandra continued to exist and how it ended are unknown to us. We learn from Hiuen Tsang that a line of Brāhmaṇa kings ruled in Samatāṭa in the first half of the seventh century A.D. But he does not give us any information about it beyond stating that Śilabhadra, the

<sup>1</sup> Paśupati Ins. dated year 153 (*IA.* ix. 178). This year is usually referred to the Harsha Era (*INI.* 268), but Jayaswal refers this and other dates in Nepalese records to a new era starting in 595 A.D. (*JBORS.* xxii. 164 ff. 184).

<sup>2</sup> *GR.* 17-18; *DUNI.* i. 241; *Lévi-Nepal.* ii. 171. Harsha is usually identified with king Harsha mentioned in Tejpur cp. of Vanamāla (*JASB.* ix. Part ii. 766; *Kām. Śās.* 54).

<sup>3</sup> Cf Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara (*JBORS.* 1928, p. 304). Some scholars, while holding Harsha to be a king of the Kara dynasty, believes him also to be a descendant of Bhāskaravaṛman (*IHQ.* xiv. 841).

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to ascertain the boundaries of Samatāṭa which must have varied at different ages. The district of Tippera was definitely included in it

patriarch of Nālandā, was a scion of this royal family.<sup>1</sup> Reference may be made in this connection to a vassal chief named Jyeshṭhabhadra, mentioned in the Nidhanpur copper-plate of Bhāskaravarman. The name-ending *-bhadra* has led some scholars to connect him with Śilabhadra and to postulate the existence of a Bhadra dynasty ruling in Bengal.<sup>2</sup> Although there is not sufficient evidence in support of this view, it is not an unlikely one. This Brahmanical royal dynasty seems to have been overthrown by a line of Buddhist kings whose names contained the word *khaḍga* as an essential element. The history of this dynasty, generally referred to as the Khaḍga dynasty, is known from two copper-plates found at Ashrafpur, 30 miles north-east of Dacca,<sup>3</sup> and a short record inscribed on an image of Sarvāṇī (Durgā) found at Deulbāḍī, 14 miles south of Comilla.<sup>4</sup> These disclose the names of three rulers *viz.*, Khaḍgodyama, his son Jātakhadga, and the latter's son Devakhadga. They also refer to the queen and the son of the last named king, *viz.* Prabhāvatī and Rājarāja, also called Rājarājabhaṭa. They were all devout Buddhists.

Khaḍgodyama is described as *nṛpādhirāja* (overlord of kings) and seems to have been the founder of the kingdom. The records unfortunately do not contain any historical information, beyond the usual vague praises, about him or his successors. Of the two copper-plate grants of Devakhadga, one is dated in his 13th regnal year, and the date of the other is doubtful.<sup>5</sup> Both were issued from the royal camp of Karmānta-*vāsaka*, which was probably their capital. This city has been identified with modern Baḍkāmtā, a

(see *supra* p. 17). The account of Hiuen Tsang, however, shows that Samatāṭa was an extensive kingdom in his days. "This country," says he, "which was on the sea side and was low and moist, was more than 3,000 *li* in circuit" (Watters, II. 187). From Samatāṭa the "pilgrim journeyed west for over 900 *li* to Tāmralipti." (*Ibid.* 189). From these indications the kingdom of Samatāṭa in the 7th century A.D. may be reasonably regarded as having comprised the area bounded by the old course of the lower Brahmaputra river in the north, Chittagong Hills in the east, and the Bay of Bengal on the south. The western boundary was perhaps formed by a branch of the old Ganges (Padmā) corresponding to modern Gorai and Madhumati rivers. Cunningham held that Samatāṭa denoted the delta of the Ganges and its chief city occupied the site of modern Jessore. Fergusson and Watters identified it respectively with Dacca and Faridpur districts. (Watters, II. 188).

<sup>1</sup> Watters, II. 109.

<sup>2</sup> *IC.* II. 795-97. As mentioned *supra* p. 80, f.n. 1, a vassal chief Nārāyaṇa-bhadra is mentioned in the Ins. of Jayanāga.

<sup>3</sup> *MASB.* I. No. 6, pp. 85-91.

<sup>4</sup> *JASB.* N.S. XIX. 375 ff; *HNI.* 203.

<sup>5</sup> *EI.* XVII. 357.

Police station in the Tippera district,<sup>1</sup> but this identification cannot be regarded as certain.

The date of these kings is also a matter of dispute. Some scholars refer them to the 9th century A.D.,<sup>2</sup> while others hold that they ruled during the latter part of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century.<sup>3</sup> Apart from the evidence of palaeography, on which both the theories are mainly based, the latter view seems to be supported by certain references in I-tsing's account of fifty-six Buddhist priests of China who visited India and the neighbouring parts during the latter half of the seventh century A.D. One of these priests, Sheng-Chi by name, found Rājabhāṭa ruling over Samatāṭa,<sup>4</sup> and this ruler has been identified by most scholars with Rājārājabhāṭa of the Khadga dynasty.<sup>5</sup> From the same work of I-tsing, we know that a certain Buddhist temple situated about 228 miles east of Nālandā<sup>6</sup> was originally founded by Śrī-Gupta, but the land belonging to it "has now reverted to the king of Eastern India, whose name is Devavarmā."<sup>7</sup> This king has been identified by some with Devagupta<sup>8</sup> of the Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha, and by others with Devakhadga.<sup>9</sup> It must be remembered, however, that the temple in question was undoubtedly situated in Bengal. Further, Magadha, the home-territory of the Later Guptas, is placed by I-tsing in Mid-India<sup>10</sup> and not Eastern India, which is described by him as bounded by Tāmralipti in the south (and west) and Harikela in the east.<sup>11</sup> The identification of Devavarmā with Devakhadga, therefore, appears to be more reasonable. The Chinese evidence, thus interpreted, leads to the conclusion that the Khadga dynasty ruled approximately between 650 and 700 A.D. and their kingdom comprised nearly the whole of Eastern and Southern Bengal. But these conclusions must be regarded as tentative.

<sup>1</sup> *EI*. xvii. 351; *JASB*. N.S. x. 87.      <sup>2</sup> *BI*. 233; *MASB*. i. No. 6, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *JASB*. N.S. xix. 378; *JASB*. N.S. x. 86; *HNI*. 202.

<sup>4</sup> *Beal-Life*. xl-xli; Chavannes, *Religieux Eminents (I-tsing)*, p. 123, f.n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *JASB*. N.S. xix. 378; *HNI*. 207.

<sup>6</sup> *IHQ*. xiv. 534.

<sup>7</sup> *Beal-Life*. xxxvi-xxxvii; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 83; *IHQ*. xiv. 534.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. R. G. Basak was presumably led to this view (*HNI*. 180) by the mistaken belief that the land granted by the king was situated near Mahābodhi temple in Gayā, whereas, as noted above, it was more than two hundred miles further to the east, in Bengal (*supra* p. 69).

<sup>9</sup> *JASB*. N.S. xix. 378.

<sup>10</sup> Bodh-Gayā is referred to as situated in Mid-India in connection with the biography of Hiuen-Ta'i (*Beal-Life*. xxx; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 35).

<sup>11</sup> Takakusu-*I-tsing*. pp. xxxi, xlvi; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 121, 106; *Beal-Life*. xl-xli. Tāmralipti is called the southern district of Eastern India from which people went towards Mid-India, showing that it was on the south-western border of East India.



The Tippera copper-plate grant of Sāmanta Lokanātha<sup>1</sup> introduces us to a line of feudatory chiefs ruling in East Bengal in the region round Tippera. The founder of the family is described as a paramount ruler, *adhimahārāja*. His name is lost, except the last two letters *-nātha*. His successor Śivanātha is, however, referred to as *sāmanta*. Nothing of importance is known of the next two rulers after whom came Lokanātha who issued the charter.

The facts recorded about Lokanātha are somewhat vague and obscure. It appears that he defeated an army sent against him by his suzerain (*paramēśvara*). On the other hand, another king, Jivadhāraṇa by name, occupied a part or whole of the kingdom of Lokanātha, but gave up the fight and restored the territory, as the latter obtained the royal charter, presumably from the suzerain. There is a further reference to a fight between Jayatūṅgavarsha and Lokanātha. The natural presumption is that Lokanātha rebelled against his suzerain Jayatūṅgavarsha, and scored an initial success by defeating the army of the latter. But he was ultimately defeated by Jivadhāraṇa, another feudatory chief of Jayatūṅgavarsha. He then submitted to his suzerain, and his dominions were restored to him. But neither Jayatūṅgavarsha, which was obviously a title rather than a proper name, nor Jivadhāraṇa can be identified.<sup>2</sup>

The copper-plate of Lokanātha is dated in words, but unfortunately the portion containing the figure for hundreds is lost, and the extant part gives us only the year 44. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar restores it as 144, and refers it to Harsha Era which would make it equivalent to 750 A.D.<sup>3</sup> Dr. R. G. Basak, on the other hand, restores the date as 344, and referring it to the Gupta Era obtains the date 663-64 A.D.<sup>4</sup> for Lokanātha. The palaeographical evidence, according to Dr. Basak, also refers the inscription to the seventh century A.D. If we accept this date, we may reasonably hold the view that Lokanātha was a feudatory of the Khadga dynasty, and Jayatūṅgavarsha was a *biruda* (title) of either Khadgodyama or Jātakhadga. It may be added that according to the copper-plates of the Khadgas, Jātakhadga annihilated his enemies and Devakhadga had under him a number of feudal rulers who paid court to him. But whether the Khadgas exercised supremacy over Lokanātha or not, there is no valid reason to suppose, as some scholars have done, that both these dynasties acknowledged a common suzerain, far less that this suzerain was the king of Kāmarūpa.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *El.* xv. 301-315.

<sup>2</sup> *IA.* Lxi. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *EHBP.* 29; *IC.* ii. 37-45.

<sup>4</sup> For a fuller account cf. *HNI.* 195 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *HNI.* 195.

The history of the Khadga dynasty after Rājarājabhata is not known to us. According to the traditions recorded by the Tibetan monk Tāranātha, to which detailed reference will be made in the next chapter,<sup>1</sup> the Chandra dynasty had been ruling in Vaṅga (and occasionally also over Gauḍa) as early as the middle of the seventh century A.D., and its last two rulers Govichandra and Lalitachandra reigned during the last part of the seventh and the first part of the eighth century A.D. It is not improbable that Govichandra supplanted the Khadgas and re-established the supremacy of his dynasty.

If we may believe in Tāranātha's statement, it was probably during the reign of Lalitachandra that Yaśovarman invaded Vaṅga. It is, however, equally or perhaps more likely that the king of Vaṅga opposing Yaśovarman was a Khadga king. But whoever he may be, he was, according to *Gauḍa-vaho*, no mean enemy, and possessed large elephant forces (v. 419). The author of *Gauḍa-vaho* pays indirectly a high tribute to the people of Vaṅga when he says that 'their faces assumed a pale colour while offering obeisance to the victor, because they were not accustomed to such an act (v. 420).' This testimony to the peoples' bravery and love of freedom was perhaps based on the personal knowledge of the author. The suzerainty of Yaśovarman was probably more nominal than real, and in any case it was short-lived. There is no evidence to show that either of the two other foreign rulers, Lalitāditya or Harsha, who probably exercised supremacy over Gauḍa, had any pretensions of suzerainty over Vaṅga.

According to Tāranātha, the death of Lalitachandra was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion. There was no king ruling over either Gauḍa or Vaṅga, and as he characteristically puts it, every Kshatriya, Grandee, Brāhmaṇa, and merchant was a king in his own house.

The contemporary records also describe the political condition of Bengal in the middle of the eighth century A.D. as '*mātsya-nyāya*,'<sup>2</sup> a technical term used in treatises on politics to denote the absence of a central ruling authority, resulting in a chaotic state, where every local chief assumes royal authority and might alone is right.

This lamentable state of political disintegration was undoubtedly caused by the series of foreign invasions and the successive changes of ruling dynasties in Gauḍa and Vaṅga referred to above. They

<sup>1</sup> For references to Tāranātha's account in this chapter cf. App. 1. to Ch. vi. *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Khalimpur cp. *Pāla Ins.*, No. 2.

shattered the political fabric reared up with so much care by Gopachandra, Dharmāditya, Samāchāradeva and Śaśāṅka. Bengal lapsed into a state of political inanity and the people must have suffered untold miseries. But the very grave peril and the extremity of the evil brought its own remedy.

## APPENDIX I

### RELATIONS OF TIBET WITH INDIA

Some time between 581 and 600 A.D., an obscure chief named Srong Tsan united the scattered hill tribes and founded a powerful kingdom in Tibet. He had an army of about 1,00,000 soldiers and led a victorious campaign to Central India, a term used by the Chinese to designate Bihar and probably also sometimes U. P. as distinguished from Eastern India comprising Bengal and Assam. The nature and extent of his conquest are not known to us, but it has been suggested that the era known as *San* and current in Bengal and Assam commemorates this forgotten foreign invasion of Bengal. The name of the era, *San*, equivalent to the last part of the name of the Tibetan king, and its epoch 593-594 A.D. both favour this hypothesis,<sup>1</sup> but it goes against the generally accepted view that the era originated in the time of Akbar by the conversion of Hijra into a solar year.<sup>2</sup>

Srong Tsan was succeeded by his son Srong-tsan Gampo.<sup>3</sup> He was a remarkable figure. He married a princess of Nepal and also won, under military pressure, the hands of the daughter of the Chinese emperor. Through the influence of his queens he was converted into Buddhism and introduced the religion in his country. The grateful posterity regards him as an incarnation of Bodhisatva Padmapāṇi. He revised Tibetan alphabet on the model of the Indian, invited Indian Paṇḍits to Tibet, and had Buddhist scriptures translated into Tibetan. He founded numerous monasteries and castles at Lhasa and made that his capital. He also extended the suzerainty of Tibet in all directions.

<sup>1</sup> Lévi-Nepal. II. 147, 153-4.

<sup>2</sup> Lévi's view has been refuted by K. P. Jayaswal (*JBORS.* XXII. 172). Some other views on the origin of Bengali *San* have been summarised by D. Trivedi in *JIH.* XIX. 292 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The account of Srong-tsan Gampo is based on the following authorities:

- a. *The Chronicles of Ladakh* (translated by Francke in *Antiquities of Tibet*, Part II, pp. 82-84).
- b. *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh* by Dr. L. Petech (published as a supplement to *IHQ.* xv), Ch. v.
- c. Lévi-Nepal. II. 148-152.
- d. Sarat Chandra Das's account [*JASB. L.* (1881), Part I, pp. 218-224]. (This is somewhat antiquated and should be read in the light of Nos. a-c).
- e. L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, Ch. III.

Srong-tsan Gampo was a contemporary of the great Indian emperor Harshavardhana. The death of Harsha, towards the close of 646 or the beginning of 647 A.D., was followed by anarchy and confusion, and the succession to the imperial throne was claimed by one of his ministers, who evidently held sway in Bihar and whose name is given in Chinese texts as Na-fü-ti O-lo-na-shuen, the original Indian name being perhaps Arjuna or Arunāśva of Tirabhukti (Tirhut, North Bihar). According to the story preserved in the Chinese annals, this Arjuna attacked a Chinese mission, under Wang-hiuen-tse, that was sent by the Chinese Emperor to Harsha. For reasons, not explained, Arjuna killed most of the members of the mission and plundered their property. Wang-hiuen-tse fled to Nepal, secured 7,000 soldiers from Nepal and 1,200 from Tibet, and, returning to Indian plains, disastrously defeated and imprisoned Arjuna and took him a captive to China. It is said that Wang-hiuen-tse stormed the capital city of Arjuna, and about 580 walled towns in India submitted to him. Even Bhāskaravarman, the king of Kāmarūpa, sent supplies to the victorious army led by Wang-hiuen-tse.<sup>1</sup> The whole episode took place during 647 and 648 A.D. in the plains of Bihar, probably to the north of the river Ganges and not far from the river Gaṇḍakī.

The story reads more like romance than sober history, and it is difficult to say what amount of historical truth there is in it. For it is as difficult to accept the story of unprovoked hostility on the part of Arjuna as to believe in the utter rout of his army and thorough conquest of his country by 8,000 soldiers.

There is, however, no doubt that the Tibetan king Srong-tsan Gampo was drawn into Indian politics, either in connection with the strange episode of Wang-hiuen-tse or in pursuance of his father's policy. Whether he actually conquered any part of Indian plains is not definitely known, but he is said to have conquered Assam and Nepal, and exercised suzerainty over half of Jambudvīpa.<sup>2</sup> There is hardly any doubt that Nepal was at this time a vassal state of Tibet and remained so for nearly two hundred years.

The reign-period of Srong-tsan Gampo is not definitely known, but there is general agreement among scholars that he died about 650 A.D.<sup>3</sup> He was succeeded by his grandson Ki-li-pa-pu (650-679)

<sup>1</sup> *JA. 9e Serie*, t. xv. (1900), pp. 297 ff. It appears that the mission of Wang-hiuen-tse was sent to Magadha and presumably the incidents took place there. The Chinese form of the name of the Indian king may mean O-lo-na-shun, king of Ti-na-fu-ti (p. 300, f.n. 2). The latter may stand for Tirabhukti (North Bihar).

<sup>2</sup> *Lévi-Nepal*, n. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Tibetan historians give various dates for the birth of Srong-tsan Gampo, ranging between 600 and 617 A.D. (*JASB.* L. 218). According to Dr. Petech, "it

who proved an extremely capable ruler. He inflicted a crushing defeat upon China in 670 A.D. and conquered Kashgar and the neighbouring regions in the North. In the South he is said to have extended his conquests as far as Central India,<sup>1</sup> but unfortunately no localities are specified.

In 702 Nepal and Central India revolted against Tibet. Nepal was subdued, and Central India, even if it did not send regular tribute, did not remain free from depredations. For, during the period 713-41 an embassy from Central India came to China to seek for help against the Tibetans and the Arabs.<sup>2</sup>

Lalitāditya Muktāpiṇḍa, the powerful king of Kashmir, was also engaged in hostilities against Tibet and sent an embassy to China between 736 and 747 A.D. He represented to the Imperial court, that in conjunction with the king of Central India he had closed the five roads leading from Tibet to India and obtained several victories against the Tibetans.<sup>3</sup> After Lalitāditya the task of keeping the Tibetans in check fell upon the Pāla kings of Bengal, and further account of the relations between Tibet and India will be given in Chapter vi.

is established with certainty that Srong-tsan Gampo was born in 569 A.D. and reigned from 620 to 650 A.D." (*op. cit.*, pp. 47-48). Lévi (*Nepal*, II. 173) and Thomas (*Literary Texts*, 49) also place the king's death at 650, the latter assigning him the date 600-650 A.D. Francke notes that the Chinese date for the king is 600-650 A.D. (*op. cit.*).

<sup>1</sup> Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 174. I do not know the authority for Sir R. C. Temple's assertion that "at this period Tibetan rule must have spread southwards far into Bengal" (*IA*. 1916, p. 39).

<sup>2</sup> Lévi-*Nepal*. II. 174-75.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 175.

## APPENDIX II

### THE EVIDENCE OF GAUḌA-VAHO

Dr. S. P. Paṇḍit, the learned editor of *Gauḍa-vaho*, has assumed without any discussion that the Lord of Magadha mentioned in that poem was identical with the king of Gauḍa.<sup>1</sup>

This assumption, though supported by Haripāla's commentary on *Gauḍa-vaho*,<sup>2</sup> rests only on evidence of a very indirect character. The principal argument, of course, is that unless the identity is assumed there remains no justification for the title of the book. But the learned editor himself admits that even such an assumption does not go very far in supporting or explaining the title. Thus he was constrained to remark as follows :

"But this mention of the Magadha king is made in the most incidental manner and with no direct purpose to refer to him as the hero who has given the name to the poem."

Another argument is supplied by internal evidence. After singing Yaśovarman's exploits the poet gives some personal accounts. We are told that one evening the poet was requested by an assembly of learned people to describe fully the manner in which Yaśovarman slew the lord of Magadha (v. 844). In reply the poet said, after describing in general terms the greatness of Yaśovarman in 228 verses, that he would sing next morning the *Gauḍa-vaho*, describing the destruction of many (or one) eastern kings. Next morning when the poet was going to relate the exploits of Yaśovarman to the learned assembly, the poets of the court talked among themselves about Yaśovarman's virtues and his prowess that had accomplished the death (*lit.* cut the throat) of the Gauḍa king (v. 1194). (This passing reference is the only allusion to the death of the Gauḍa king in the whole poem). The poet then began : "Hear the wonderful deeds of Yaśovarman." But here the poem ends.

Now it may be argued that as *Gauḍa-vaho* was sung in response to the request to describe how Yaśovarman slew the lord of Magadha, the king of Magadha was the same as Lord of Gauḍa. It is, however, not quite inconceivable that the poet, in compliance with the request, proposed to give an account not only of the king of Magadha, but also of the various eastern kings,

<sup>1</sup> GV. xxiv, xlii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. commentary on v. 844.

<sup>3</sup> GV. xliii.

including that of Gauḍa. It is evident from the abrupt end that he actually accomplished neither, and even if he did so, his work has not come down to us. This is also the view of the learned editor of *Gauḍa-vaho*.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, the union of Gauḍa and Magadha under one ruler may be a valid presumption but cannot be regarded as a proved fact, on the strength of *Gauḍa-vaho*. Further, it is legitimate to infer that even if both Magadha and Gauḍa were under the same ruler, it was the ruler of Gauḍa who had Magadha under his sway, rather than *vice-versa*. For, otherwise there is no justification for the name *Gauḍa-vaho*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *GV. XLVIII*. For a summary of the various opinions expressed by scholars on this subject cf. Supplementary Notes (pp. ccxxxix-cclv) by Utgikar in the second edition of *Gauḍa-vaho*, published by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (Poona, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> According to N. B. Utgikar, "the reason for the selection of the name of the Gauḍa king in preference to other kings subjugated by Yaśovarman, to form the designation of a highly-pitched poem, may possibly have to be sought for in the latent ill-will that can historically be proved to have existed between the two kingdoms of Kanaauj and Gauḍa before the time of Yaśovarman" (2nd ed., p. cclii). This explanation is, however, hardly convincing.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PĀLAS

THE foundation of the Pāla dynasty about the middle of the eighth century A.D. marks a new epoch in the history of Bengal. For the first time the historian has the advantage of being able to follow, in the main, the fortunes of a single ruling dynasty, the order of succession of whose long line of kings is precisely known, and whose chronology may be fixed with a tolerable degree of certainty. This advantage does not forsake him till the end of the Hindu period, in spite of occasional political disintegration and the rise of local dynasties ruling in various parts of the province.

The history of the Pālas, extending over four centuries, may be divided into the following stages :

- I. The Origin and Early History of the Pālas.
- II. The Pāla Empire.
- III. The Decline and Fall of the Empire.
- IV. Restoration.
- V. The Break-up of the Pāla Kingdom.
- VI. Disintegration and Temporary Revival.
- VII. The End of the Pāla Rule.

#### I. THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE PĀLAS

The anarchy and confusion which prevailed in Bengal for more than a century<sup>1</sup> led to a natural reaction. The people, who had suffered untold miseries for a long period, suddenly developed a political wisdom and a spirit of self-sacrifice to which there is no recorded parallel in the history of Bengal. They perceived that the establishment of a single strong central authority offered the only effective remedy against political disintegration within and invasions from abroad to which their unhappy land was so long a victim. They also realised that such a happy state of things could only be brought about by the voluntary surrender of authority to one person by the numerous petty chiefs who had been exercising independent political authority in different parts of the country. The ideal of subordinating individual interests to a national cause was not as

<sup>1</sup> See *supra* pp. 77-90.

common in India in the eighth century A.D. as it was in Europe a thousand years later. Our admiration is, therefore, all the greater, that without any struggle the independent political chiefs recognised the suzerainty of a popular hero named Gopāla. Thus took place a bloodless revolution which both in its spirit and subsequent results reminds us of what happened in Japan about A.D. 1870.

Unfortunately this memorable episode in the history of Bengal is known to us only in brief outline, and details are altogether lacking. The Khalimpur copper-plate<sup>1</sup> issued in the 32nd year of the reign of Dharmapāla, refers to this event in the following couplet :

*mātsyanyāyam=apohitum prakṛitibhir=lakshmyāḥ karam  
grāhitaḥ|*  
*śrī-Gopāla=iti kṣhitīśa-śirasām chūḍāmanis=tat-sutah||*

Kielhorn translates the above as follows :

"His son was the crest-jewel of the heads of kings, the glorious Gopāla, whom the people made take the hand of Fortune, to put an end to the practice of fishes."

In a footnote to the above, Kielhorn adds : "Gopāla was made king by the people to put an end to a lawless state of things in which everyone was the prey of his neighbour." He also cites authority for his interpretation of the phrase '*mātsya-nyāya*.'

Now there is no dispute regarding the general interpretation of the above passage, viz., that Gopāla was made king in order to put an end to the state of anarchy which prevailed in Bengal. The only point that is open to discussion is the agency that made him king. According to the couplet referred to above, Gopāla was made king by the '*prakṛitis*.' The common meaning of the word is 'subjects,' and it has consequently been held that Gopāla was elected king by the general body of people.<sup>2</sup> Although this view has met with general acceptance, it is open to doubt whether the passage refers to anything like a regular election by the general mass of people, and, if so, whether this was at all practicable in those days and in such abnormal times. It would, perhaps, be more reasonable to hold that the choice was originally made by the leading chiefs, and was subsequently endorsed and acclaimed by the people. This may well be regarded as tantamount to an 'election by the people' referred to in the Khalimpur copper-plate.

It has been suggested on the other hand that '*prakṛiti*' should be taken as a technical term meaning principal officers, and that

<sup>1</sup> Ins. No. 2 (see list of inscriptions, App. 1 to this chapter).

<sup>2</sup> *BI.* 161, 162, 171; *GR.* 21; *GL.* 19 f.n.

Gopāla was placed on the throne by the principal officers of the state.<sup>1</sup> This view is supported by an instance recorded in the *Rājataranginī*, viz., the election of Jalauka as king by a group of seven officials called 'prakṛitis.' It must be remembered, however, that such election is possible, and even very probable, only when there is a strong and stable government exercising authority over the whole kingdom. In the absence of such a central government, we can hardly think of ministers or a set of permanent officials who could offer the throne to a nominee of their own. If we presume, as we must, that a central political authority exercising any sort of control over the whole of Gauḍa or Vaṅga had ceased to function for a long period, and the country was divided into a large number of independent principalities, we can scarcely think of a group of officials (presumably of one of these states) placing somebody on the throne of Bengal, or a considerable portion of the province.

On the whole, therefore, we are justified in holding the view that Gopāla was called to the throne by the voice of the people, though perhaps the selection was originally made by a group of leaders or independent ruling chiefs.

Although this remarkable episode has not been referred to in Indian literature, and its very memory has now vanished from Bengal, it was a living tradition among the people even so late as the sixteenth century A.D. This is proved by the curious story recorded by the Tibetan historian Lāmā Tāranātha.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately we possess very meagre information about the life and reign of Gopāla. His father Vapyāṭa and grandfather Dayitavishṇu are referred to in very general terms in the official records, and there is nothing to indicate that they were ruling chiefs. Vapyāṭa is called 'destroyer of foes,' but this does not imply anything more than that he was, perhaps, a military chief.<sup>3</sup>

In a commentary to *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* composed by Haribhadra, during the reign of Gopāla's son Dharmapāla, the latter is described as *Rājabhṭādi-vamśa-patita*.<sup>4</sup> This led MM. Haraprasād Śāstrī to conclude that Dharmapāla belonged "to the family of a military officer of some king."<sup>5</sup> Others have taken

<sup>1</sup> *EHBP*. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. App. III to this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. J. C. Ghosh's view that Vapyāṭa was the first king of the line rests on very insufficient grounds [*IHQ*. VII. 751 (831); IX. 481].

<sup>4</sup> *rājye Rājabhṭādi-vamśa-patita-śrī-Dharmapālasya vai| tattvāloka-vidhāyini virachitā sat-pañjikā-eyam mayā|*

The verse, occurring at the end of ch. 32 of the commentary, is quoted and an account of the MS. is given in *BI*. 164, f.n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *RC*. 6. R. D. Banerji misquoted this passage and by reading 'the same' for 'some' attributed to MM. Śāstrī the view that the Pālas were descended from a general of Rājabhṭa (*BI* 164, f.n. 4). MM. Śāstrī, far from holding this view,

Rājabhaṭa as a personal name, and identified him with the king of the same name ruling in Samatata when Sheng-chi came to India towards the close of the seventh century A.D.<sup>1</sup> This Rājabhaṭa may be identified with the heir-apparent of Devakhaḍga named in official records of the dynasty as Rājarāja and Rājarāja-Bhaṭa.<sup>2</sup> The passage cited by MM. Haraprasād Śāstri would thus lead to the conclusion that the Pālas were connected in some way with the Khaḍgas. The fact that the Khaḍgas were Buddhists, like the Pālas, and were ruling in Eastern Bengal, shortly before the accession of Gopāla, undoubtedly strengthens this presumption. On the other hand, apart from the questionable interpretation of Rājabhaṭa as a personal name, the word '*patita*' creates considerable difficulty. There is no warrant for the assumption that it means 'descended by the female line.'<sup>3</sup> It is normally used in a derogatory sense such as 'fallen,' 'outcast,' etc., and scarcely ever in the sense of 'being descended from,' though the latter meaning is not altogether unknown.<sup>4</sup>

Some scholars have traced a subtle reference to the royal family of Dharmapāla's mother in the fifth verse of the Khalimpur copper-plate (Ins. No. 2). In this verse Daddadevī, the wife of Gopāla, is compared to the wives of the deities Moon, Agni (Fire), Śiva, Kuvera, Indra, and Viṣṇu.<sup>5</sup> In course of the comparison, the word '*Bhadrātma-jā*' is used immediately after Bhadrā, the name of Kuvera's wife. Kielhorn, while translating this verse, took '*Bhadrātma-jā*' as an epithet qualifying Daddadevī, and translated it as 'a daughter of the Bhadra king,' regarding Bhadra as a tribal or family name. Mr. Akshaya Kumar Maitreya, on the other hand, took '*Bhadrātma-jā*' as an ordinary adjective to Bhadrā, meaning daughter of a gentleman. It must be confessed, however, that there is hardly any point in applying such a colourless epithet to Bhadrā alone of all the goddesses mentioned in the verse. Kielhorn, therefore, may be right in his interpretation, and Daddadevī might belong to the royal Bhadra family referred to in the last chapter.<sup>6</sup>

suggested (*op. cit.*) that Dayita-Viṣṇu, the grandfather of Gopāla, belonged to the family of Mātṛi-Viṣṇu mentioned in the Eran Stone Ins. (Fleet. CII. III. No. 19).

<sup>1</sup> *VJI.* 147. See *supra* p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *JASB.* N.S. xix. 378. R. D. Banerji rejects this view (*BI.* 165-66), but it is accepted by R. G. Basak (*HNI.* 207). Mr. J. C. Ghosh identifies Rājabhaṭa with Vapyaṭa, the father of Gopāla (*IHQ.* ix. 481). This seems to be very unlikely.

<sup>3</sup> *IHQ.* vii. 533.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *avama-patito rāja* (*Chāṇakya-sūtra*, 81).

<sup>5</sup> For a similar comparison cf. *Mbh. Adī-P.* ch. 199, vv. 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> See *supra* p. 86.

It would thus appear that we have hardly any definite information regarding the origin of the royal Pāla family. Strangely enough, unlike other mediaeval records, we do not find any mythical pedigree of the dynasty in the Pāla inscriptions. In the Kamauli Plate of Vaidyadeva (Ins. No. 50), who was originally the minister of a Pāla king, Vighrahapāla III is said to have belonged to the solar dynasty.<sup>1</sup> According to the commentary of Sandhyākara Nandī's *Rāmācharita* (I. 4), Dharmapāla was 'the light of Samudra's race' (*samudra-kula-dīpa*) i.e., descended from the ocean.<sup>2</sup> It may be noted that both the records belong to the very end of the Pāla period, more than three hundred and fifty years after the accession of Gopāla, and naturally very little weight attaches to the theories contained in them about the origin of the dynasty. Besides, the membership of the solar or lunar family was commonly claimed for most of the royal houses of those days, and there is nothing distinctive about it. The descent from the *samudra* or ocean has undoubtedly more novelty in it. A distant echo of this may be traced in an old Bengali text called *Dhārma-maṅgala* composed by Ghanarāma.<sup>3</sup> It records that Dharmapāla had no son and his queen Vallabhadevī was banished to a forest. There she had a liaison with the ocean and a son was born to her. This silly story gives a wrong name for Dharmapāla's queen, and describes him as a devout Vaishṇava and devoted to the Brāhmaṇas.

Tāranātha tells us that Gopāla was succeeded by a son whom Nāgarāja Sagarapāla, the sovereign of the ocean, begot on his younger queen.<sup>4</sup> This is evidently another version of the origin of the Pālas from *samudra* or ocean. These stories are too silly to be seriously considered,<sup>5</sup> and do not help us in the least in tracing the ancestry of the Pālas. An attempt has been made to reconcile the two different traditions of *samudra* and *sūrya* origin by holding that *samudra-kula* means *sūrya-kula* or solar race to which Samudra, the son of the mythical king Sagara, belonged.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This tradition is also recorded in *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, cf. *JASB.* 1898, p. 20. In a *champi-kavya*, called *Udayasundarī-kathā*, composed by Sodḍhala, a poet of Gujarat in the eleventh century A.D., and published in the Gaekwad Oriental Series, Dharmapāla is said to have belonged to the family of Māndhātā (p. 4). As Māndhātā is a well-known mythical king of the solar race, this reference supports the view that the Pālas belonged to the solar race.

<sup>2</sup> *RC.* p. ix.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *BI.* 168, f.n. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Tar.*, pp. 208-9. According to Tāranātha, this successor was Devapāla, but according to Buston (*History of Buddhism*, translated by Dr. E. Obermiller, Heidelberg 1932, p. 156), he was Dharmapāla.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. R. D. Banerji tries to give a rational interpretation of '*Samudra-kula*' by the theory that the Pālas came from the sea (*PB.* 46).

<sup>6</sup> This view, originally propounded by Mr. Prabhaschandra Sen, has been restated at some length by Mr. J. C. Ghosh (*IHQ.* ix. 484-85).

As to the caste of the Pālas, the commentary on a verse of *Rāmacharita* (i. 17) distinctly says that Rāmapāla was born of a Kshatriya king. Tāranātha tells us that Gopāla was begotten on a Kshatriya woman by the Tree-God.<sup>1</sup> It may be readily believed, therefore, that the Pālas, like most of the ruling families in mediaeval India, were regarded as Kshatriyas. This view is corroborated by the matrimonial relations of the Pālas with the Rāshṭrakūṭas and the Kalachuris. But according to that curious work *Mañjuśrī-mūlakaḥ*, which refers to kings only by the first letter of the name, kings, who have been identified with the Pālas, are said to be of the menial caste.<sup>2</sup> Abu'l-Fazl calls the Pālas Kāyasthas.<sup>3</sup> But the value of the last two evidences is not very great, and they need not be seriously considered.

Perhaps one of the reasons why no reference to the origin and caste of the Pālas occurs in their own records is the fact that they were Buddhists and did not care so much to adopt Brahmanical institutions or traditions. The copper-plates of the Pālas begin with an invocation to Lord Buddha, and many kings of the dynasty are known to have been great patrons of Buddhism. According to the Tibetan tradition,<sup>4</sup> Gopāla founded a Vihāra or monastery at Nālandā and established many religious schools. Tāranātha, as usual, gives a long list of Buddhist teachers who flourished during this reign. Whether Gopāla himself first adopted Buddhism, or whether he was born in a Buddhist family, it is not possible to determine. But certain it is that the successors of Gopāla were all ardent followers of Buddhism, and for nearly four hundred years their court proved to be the last stronghold of that dying faith in India. For this reason the Pāla kings enjoyed an important position in the international Buddhist world, and they maintained intact the fountain-head of later Buddhism from which streams flowed to Tibet in the north and the Indian archipelago in the south and east.

As in the case of the origin of the family, uncertainty also hangs over the location of the original kingdom of Gopāla. The inscriptions do not supply any definite information on the point. The fact that during the first two hundred years of the Pāla rule, covering the reigns of eight kings, almost all the copper-plate grants were issued from victorious camps in Magadha, and all the other inscriptions, with only a single exception, belonged to that region, naturally led many to conclude that the Pālas originally ruled in

<sup>1</sup> *Tar.*, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Tataḥ pareṇa bhūpālā gopālā dāsajivinaḥ*, *MMK(J)*, v. 883. Mr. Jayaswal takes Gopāla in this verse as referring to the Pāla dynasty. This is very doubtful, specially as Buddha's doctrine is said to have been lost during their reign (*IHI*, 72).

<sup>3</sup> *Am. Transl.* ii. 145.

<sup>4</sup> *Tar.*, 204; Buxton, 156.

Magadha and subsequently conquered Bengal. But this view can hardly be maintained in the light of positive evidences which have come to light in recent years.

In the first place, the *Rāmacharita* definitely refers to Varendri as the 'janakabhūh' or ancestral home of the Pālas. Secondly, the Gwalior inscription refers to the adversary of Nāgabhaṭa, who can hardly be anybody other than Dharmapāla, as *Vaṅgapati*. These two evidences make it almost certain that the home and the original kingdom of the Pālas must be placed in Bengal. This is indirectly supported by the Bādāl Pillar inscription which says that Dharmapāla, to begin with, was only the ruler of the east, and gradually spread his dominions in other directions.

We should, of course, remember that Varendra (also called Varendri) denoted the northern, and Vaṅga, the eastern and south-eastern part of Bengal. The evidences of *Rāmacharita* and Gwalior inscription might, therefore, appear to be contradictory, unless we regard Vaṅga as denoting the whole province of Bengal. Such an use of the name Vaṅga can, however, be justified or explained only on the supposition that the Pālas were originally the rulers of Vaṅga, and the name came to be applied to the rest of the province with the growth of their dominions. The conflicting nature of the two evidences, therefore, still remains. Perhaps Tāranātha's account supplies the best solution of the difficulty, viz., that Gopāla was born of a Kshatriya family near Puṇḍravardhana, but was subsequently elected ruler of Bhaṅgala, undoubtedly a corrupt form of Vaṅga or Vaṅgāla.<sup>1</sup>

But whatever may have been the limits of the original kingdom of Gopāla,<sup>1</sup> it is reasonable to hold that he consolidated his authority over the whole of Bengal. In the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (Ins. No. 6), Gopāla is said to have conquered the earth as far as the sea. This, of course, does not mean much. But it is difficult to believe that his son and successor Dharmapāla could carry on victorious campaigns up to the Punjab, unless he had inherited from his father at least the consolidated kingdom of Bengal.

From the time of Nārāyaṇapāla onwards the copper-plate grants of the Pāla kings begin with a verse which is an eulogy both of *Buddha and Gopāla*. Naturally all the epithets are equally applicable to both of them. One of these runs as follows :

jītvā yaḥ kāmak-āri-prabhavam=abhibhavam śāśvatīm-  
prāpa śāntīm

<sup>1</sup> For fuller discussion, see App. III to this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> R. D. Banerji held that Gopāla was elected ruler of Gauḍa, Vaṅga, and Magadha (*BI.* 102), but no evidence is cited.

In the case of Gopāla, the passage seems to mean that he established peace in his kingdom by having defeated the attacks of the oppressors or tyrants, the expression 'kāmakāri' meaning those who do not acknowledge any control and act wilfully. The reference in this case is, of course, to the period of anarchy and political disintegration that prevailed before the accession of Gopāla. It has been suggested, however, that 'Kāmakāri' means 'king of Kāmarūpa, who is an enemy,' *Kāma*, with the pleonastic suffix *ka*, standing for Kāmarūpa, under the well-known Sanskrit aphorism that part of a name may be substituted for the full name.<sup>1</sup> It is unreasonable to rule out the interpretation altogether, but it is to be seriously considered whether such an achievement of Gopāla, as the conquest of Assam, or of Magadha (as noted by Tāranātha), would not have been more directly stated in the official records, if it were a fact. Besides, as we shall see (*infra* p. 117), Kāmarūpa was conquered in the time of Devapāla.

On the whole, therefore, it would be safe to conclude that the main achievement of Gopāla was the establishment of durable peace in Bengal by bringing under control the turbulent elements in the province. That the reign of Gopāla ended in peaceful pursuits and not adventurous military expeditions is also hinted at in verse 3<sup>2</sup> of the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (Ins. No. 6).

The reign-period of Gopāla is not definitely known. According to Tāranātha, he ruled for forty-five years,<sup>3</sup> but this statement cannot be accepted without corroboration. According to *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*,<sup>4</sup> his reign-period was twenty-seven years. His accession to the throne may be placed with a tolerable degree of certainty within a decade of 750 A.D., and he probably ceased to rule about 770 A.D.<sup>5</sup> The fact that he was called to the throne at a critical moment shows that he must have been fairly advanced in age, and given proof of his prowess and ability. It is not likely, therefore, that he ruled for a very long time. According to *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, he died at the advanced age of eighty<sup>6</sup>. This is hardly likely, as we know that his son and grandson ruled respectively for at least thirty-two and thirty-five years.

<sup>1</sup> *IHQ*, vii. 531-32.

<sup>2</sup> 'Having conquered the earth as far as the sea, he released the war-elephants, as they were no longer required.'

<sup>3</sup> *Tar.*, p. 204.

<sup>4</sup> *MMK(J)*, v. 690.

<sup>5</sup> The dates of the Pāla kings have been discussed separately in App. II to this chapter.

<sup>6</sup> *MMK(J)*, v. 690.



## II. THE PĀLA EMPIRE

1. *Dharmapāla* (c. 770–810 A.D.)

Gopāla was succeeded in c. 770 A.D. by his son Dharmapāla, who was destined to raise the Pāla kingdom to the high-water mark of glory and power. But before we describe his life and reign, it is necessary to pass in rapid review the political condition of India at the time.

In the Deccan, the Rāshtrakūṭas had wrested the political power from the Chālukyas, and established themselves as the ruling dynasty in 753 A.D., *i.e.*, about the time when Gopāla ascended the throne. Two powerful rulers of this dynasty, Dhruva (c. 780-794) and his son Govinda III (c. 794-814), sent strong military expeditions to extend their powers in Northern India, and brilliant, though temporary, successes attended their efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Their chief adversaries in the north were the Pratihāras. It is not necessary for our present purpose to enter into the controversial details about the early history of the dynasty. It will suffice to say that Vatsarāja, an early ruler of this dynasty, and one of whose known dates is 783-84 A.D., was a powerful king who not only consolidated his power in Mālava and Rājputāna, but also tried to extend his conquests to Eastern India.<sup>2</sup> In particular, he defeated the lord of Gauḍa. His success was, however, short-lived. He was defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭa king Dhruva who completed his triumph by defeating the lord of Gauḍa in the Ganges-Jumna Doab.

It would thus appear that shortly after his accession to the throne, Dharmapāla was involved in a tripartite struggle between the three chief ruling powers of India. It is difficult to follow the exact course of this struggle in strict chronological order, as the few isolated facts, known to us from the inscriptions of the three dynasties, are capable of different interpretations. We can only trace what seems to be the most probable trend of events in the light of all available materials.

The fight between the Gauḍas and the Pratihāras was the natural consequence of the imperial designs of both these powers. Dharmapāla inherited a consolidated and powerful kingdom and began to expand his dominions towards the west, where the political situation was admirably suited to his ambition. With the passing away of Yaśovarman and Lalitāditya, no great power or

<sup>1</sup> For the history of the Rāshtrakūṭas, cf. *RA*.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the Pratihāras, cf. *GP*; *TK*. Chs. x-xi.

political personality arose in Northern India, and for nearly half a century it offered a most tempting field to every ambitious political adventurer. Dharmapāla seized the opportunity and rapidly pushed his conquests towards the west. Unluckily for him, Vatsarāja, the king of the Pratihāras, also felt the same urge of imperial ambitions and utilised the same opportunity by pushing his conquests towards the north and east. In the light of subsequent events, one might safely conclude that the possession of the imperial city of Kanauj was the common objective of both, and the contending parties probably came into clash somewhere in the Doab.<sup>1</sup> Dharmapāla was defeated in this encounter, and the effect of this reverse might have been serious, but for the providential intervention of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Dhruva who inflicted a disastrous defeat upon Vatsarāja.

After defeating Vatsarāja, Dhruva evidently marched through his dominions right up to the Doab. Here he met Dharmapāla<sup>2</sup> and defeated him. But this was not evidently a lasting victory with any serious consequence to Dharmapāla. Dhruva was too far away from his base to follow up his victory, and there were probably other causes to induce him to turn back. In any case, he shortly returned to the Deccan.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Pratihāra king Vatsarāja is said to have "appropriated with ease the fortune of royalty of the Gauda" (*IA.* xi. 157; *EI.* vi. 248). This does not necessarily mean, as has been suggested (*BI.* 148), that Vatsarāja advanced as far as Gauda, far less that he actually occupied both Gauda and Vaṅga. For all we know, the encounter of the lord of Gauda with Vatsarāja, like that with Dhruva, might have taken place in the Doab or its neighbourhood, in a territory far from the borders of Bengal. This is more probable as we have no evidence of any extensive territorial conquests of Vatsarāja such as would be implied in a triumphal march from Malwa up to the heart of Bengal. No special importance need be attached to the statement that he took away Gauda's umbrellas of state, for the same claim is made by Dhruva, though in this case we know definitely that the encounter took place in the Doab, far away from Bengal (*GP.* 34-35). A verse in *Prithvirāja-vijaya* says that the sword of the Chāhamāna king Durlabharāja purified itself by a dip at the confluence of the Ganges and the sea, and by the taste of the land of Gauda. As Durlabharāja's son was a feudatory of Nāgabhaṭa, it has been suggested that Durlabharāja was a feudatory of Vatsarāja and accompanied him in his expedition to Bengal (*IHQ.* xiv. 844-45). It is, however, not very safe to form such important conclusions on stray verses composed about four centuries after the events described.

<sup>2</sup> As the encounter between Dhruva and the lord of Gauda took place in the Gangetic Doab, the latter must have extended his conquests beyond Allahabad in the west. This circumstance and the fact that the fight must have taken place some time after 780 A.D. leave no doubt that the lord of Gauda was Dharmapāla, and not his predecessor.

<sup>3</sup> *RA.* 58.

In spite of his reverses, Dharmapāla derived the greatest benefit from Dhruva's campaign. His mighty opponent Vatsarāja was a 'fugitive in the trackless desert,' while his (Vatsarāja's) dominions were trampled under feet by the victorious Karpāta army. For some time to come Dharmapāla had no more fear of opposition from that quarter. So he continued his victorious campaign, and, emboldened by success, advanced to the furthest limits of Northern India.

The full account of this wonderful military campaign is not known, but a few important details have been preserved in the Pāla records. According to v. 3 of the Bhagalpur copper-plate of Nārāyaṇapāla (No. 14), Dharmapāla acquired the sovereignty of Mahodaya (*i.e.* Kanauj) by having defeated Indrarāja<sup>1</sup> and other enemies, and then conferred it upon Chakrāyudha.

That Dharmapāla proceeded far beyond Kanauj in course of his military campaigns is proved by v. 7 of the Monghyr copper-plate (No. 6). It tells us that in course of the victorious campaigns of Dharmapāla, his attendants performed religious rites at Kedāra, Gokarṇa, the confluence of the Ganges and the sea, and various other holy places. Kedāra is undoubtedly the famous place of pilgrimage on the Himālayas in Gharwal, and although Gokarṇa cannot be definitely identified,<sup>2</sup> the verse leaves no doubt that

<sup>1</sup> It has been generally taken for granted that this Indrarāja is no other than Indrāyudha, mentioned in the Jaina *Harivamśa* of Jinasena as having ruled in the north in the year 783-84 A.D. It is, however, more probable that Indrarāja was the brother of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Dhruva whom he had left in charge of Lāṭeśvara-maṇḍala, which presumably represented Gujarat and other Rāshtrakūṭa possessions in the north (GP. 37, f.n. 2). In that case the defeat of Indrarāja was a further episode in the Rāshtrakūṭa-Gauḍa rivalry by which Dharmapāla not only avenged his former defeat by Dhruva, but also cleared the way for his further conquests by eliminating the only power that stood between him and the empire. As to Indrāyudha, we do not know anything beyond what has been stated in *Harivamśa*, not even whether he was king of Kanauj, or related in any way to Chakrāyudha who was placed on the throne of Kanauj by Dharmapāla as his protégé and vassal.

<sup>2</sup> Kielhorn identified Gokarṇa with a place of that name in the North Kanara district of the Bombay Presidency which is even now a place of pilgrimage frequented by Hindu devotees from all parts of India (IA. 1892, p. 257, f.n. 56). This identification implies a victorious march of Dharmapāla across the Bombay Presidency, right through the dominions of the powerful Rāshtrakūṭas, and it is difficult to accept it without more positive evidence. A more probable identification is that with Gokarṇa in Nepal, on the bank of the Bagmati, about two miles above and north-east of Paśupati. This identification is strengthened by the tradition preserved in the *Svayambhu Purāṇa*, that Dharmapāla, ruler of Gauḍa, occupied the throne of Nepāla. Curiously enough, the same *Svayambhu Purāṇa*

Dharmapāla practically overran the greater part of Northern India.

In the light of the above facts, we can understand the full significance of verse 12 of the Khalimpur copper-plate of Dharmapāla.<sup>1</sup> It describes how Dharmapāla installed the king of Kanyakubja in the presence of the chiefs of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhāra, and Kira, who uttered acclamations of approval, bowing down respectfully with their diadems trembling. There can be hardly any doubt that the king of Kanyakubja referred to in this passage was Chakrāyudha. It would appear that at the conclusion of his victorious campaign, Dharmapāla held an imperial assembly or *Durbar* at Kanauj whose sovereignty he had acquired by his own prowess. The *Durbar* was attended by the vassal chiefs named above, who all witnessed the installation of Chakrāyudha by Dharmapāla as his vassal chief of Kanauj.

This famous scene represents the culmination of Dharmapāla's triumph, and testifies to the formal assumption by him of the position of suzerain of Northern India which he had earned by defeating various kings. The categorical statement that the chiefs of various states assembled in Kanauj, and bowed their heads in

refers to Gaṅgāsāgara and places it in or near Kapilavastu. It has been plausibly suggested that Gokarṇa and 'Gaṅgāśametāmbudhi' of the Monghyr copper-plate refer to the two places in Nepal, and that verse 7 of Monghyr copper-plate refers to a campaign of Dharmapāla along the foot of the Himālays (*IC.* iv. 266). In support of this it may be pointed out that the confluence of the Ganges and the sea was situated in Bengal itself, and it was too near home to deserve special mention, either as a place of pilgrimage visited by the followers of Dharmapāla, or as a landmark in his victorious campaign. On the whole, it would be better, in the present state of our knowledge, to regard Gokarṇa as situated in Nepal, and leave the other question undecided.

It may be mentioned here that a place named Gokarṇa with a temple is referred to in an inscription in the Pudukottai State (*Economic Conditions in Southern India* by A. Appadorai, Vol. I, p. 21). In the light of what has been said later about the military campaigns of Devapāla in the South Indian peninsula, the location of Gokarṇa, conquered by Dharmapāla, in the Pudukottai State is worth consideration.

<sup>1</sup> Although the general purport and implication of this verse are clear, its exact meaning is somewhat obscure on account of the defective construction of the last line. The emendation of "dattaḥ śrī-kanyakubjas-" into "dattaśrīḥ kanyakubjas-" (*GL.* 14, f.n. 12) would give the meaning suggested in the text. The expression 'svā-bhishhek-odakumbhaḥ,' however, implies that Dharmapāla's own coronation (as emperor) also probably took place before Chakrāyudha was placed on the throne of Kanyakubja. Kielhorn suggests in a footnote that the word 'dattaḥ' in the verse, as it stands, "indicates that Dharmapāla had been requested to permit the installation of the king of Kanyakubja" (*EL.* iv. 252, f.n. 3).

approval of the coronation ceremony held by the command of Dharmapāla, leaves no doubt that they all acknowledged his suzerainty, though it is conceivable that some of them might have offered homage and submission even though they were not actually defeated in battle. It would indeed be fantastic to suppose that although they were all independent chiefs, in no way subordinate to Dharmapāla, they had come all the way to Kanauj only to approve of the settlement of political affairs in that city 'by way of diplomatic gesture.'<sup>1</sup> The expression '*pranati-parimataih*' hardly leaves any doubt about their status *vis a vis* Dharmapāla.

Fortunately, we have got an independent positive evidence in support of the view that Dharmapāla held the position of a suzerain in North India. In the *Udayasundari-kathā*, a *champu-kāvya* composed in the first-half of the eleventh century A.D. by Śoḍḍhala, a Gujarāṭi poet, king Dharmapāla is referred to as *Uttarāpatha-svāmin* or lord of Uttarāpatha.<sup>2</sup> This Dharmapāla can only refer to the Pāla emperor of that name. The expression *Pañcha-Gauḍa* is also possibly reminiscent of the Gauda empire of Dharmapāla.<sup>3</sup>

An idea of the extent of Dharmapāla's empire may be obtained if we can definitely locate the states mentioned in v. 12 of the Khalimpur copper-plate. Among them the kingdoms of Gandhāra, Madra, and Kuru are well-known, and were situated respectively in the western, central, and eastern Punjab, while Kīra corresponds to the Kangra district in the north-eastern part of the same province.<sup>4</sup> Matsya corresponds to modern Alwar State with parts of Jaipur and Bharatpur, while Avanti is certainly modern Malwa. Bhoja, Yadu, and Yavana countries cannot be located with certainty. The last-named probably refers to an Arab principality, either in the Indus Valley or in the North-Western Frontier Province. The Yadus or Yādavas ruled over the kingdom of Simhapura in the Punjab,<sup>5</sup> but other regions like Mathurā and Dvārakā are also traditionally associated with them, and it cannot be exactly ascertained which section of the Yādavas accepted the suzerainty of Dharmapāla. In view, however, of the fact that the list includes several other states in the Punjab, the Yadu principality of Simhapura is probably meant. As regards the Bhojas they are an ancient people, and the kingdom of Bhojakata, mentioned in Vākātaka copper-plates, includes at least a part of Berar, if not the

<sup>1</sup> TK. 216-17, 230.

<sup>2</sup> Gaekwad Oriental Series edition, pp. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> See *supra* p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> For the location and an account of the kingdom of Kīra, cf. *IHQ.* ix, 11-17.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the Lakkhāmaṇḍal Prastāvi (*EI.* i. 10).

whole of it.<sup>1</sup> Thus, on the whole, it may be safely concluded that Dharmapāla exercised his imperial sway over the Punjab, Eastern Rājputāna, Malwa and Berar, and this was the result of the victorious military campaigns which carried him as far as Kedāra in the western Himālayas, and in course of which he defeated Indrarāja and other kings.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the empire of Dharmapāla was not like that of the Mauryas or Guptas, or even of the later Pratihāras. The vassal states were not annexed to the central dominions of the emperor, and their rulers were left undisturbed so long as they acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor, and rendered such homage and military assistance as might have been fixed by usage or treaties. So we cannot regard the Punjab, Eastern Rājputāna, Malwa, and Berar as integral parts of a consolidated dominion under the direct rule of the emperor. This is clearly indicated in verse 8 of the Morghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (No. 6), and is in consonance with the available evidences in our possession.

The kingdom of Kanauj, roughly corresponding to modern U.P., evidently stood on a different footing. Dharmapāla not only conquered it but drove its ruler away, and placed his own nominee on its throne. He had the coronation of this nominee, and probably also his own imperial coronation, celebrated at Kanauj in the presence of a large number of vassal chiefs. It was thus perhaps regarded as a ceremonial capital of the empire. Although he did not definitely annex the kingdom of Kanauj to the central kingdom, comprising Bengal and Bihar, which was ruled by him in person, he left it in charge of his protégé Chakrāyudha, who owed his position entirely to the emperor, and whose status was thus very inferior to that of the other vassal chiefs.

We can thus easily visualise the structure of the Pāla empire under Dharmapāla. Bengal and Bihar, the nucleus of the empire, were under the direct rule of Dharmapāla, a long stretch of territory between the borders of Bihar and Punjab formed the dependency of Kanauj, while a large number of principalities in the Punjab, Eastern Rājputāna, Malwa, Berar, and probably also Nepal (if we believe the story in *Svayambhu Purāṇa*) formed the vassal states, enjoying internal autonomy but paying homage and obedience.

It seems very likely that Dharmapāla completed this imperial fabric during the period that intervened between the retirement of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark. Collins, *The Geographical data of the Raghuvamśa and Daśakumāra-charita* (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 28, 27ff.

Dhruva and the re-appearance of his son Govinda III in the north. As these two events may be dated approximately at 780 and 800 A.D.,<sup>1</sup> we may roughly describe the career of Dharmapāla somewhat as follows :

- c. 770 A.D.—Accession to the throne of Bengal.
- c. 770-790 A.D.—Conquest of Magadha and a large part of U.P., even extending beyond Allahabad. Encounter with Vatsarāja and Dhruva in the Ganges-Jumna Doab.
- c. 790-800 A.D.—Victorious campaign up to the Indus on the West, Himālayas in the North and even beyond Narbadā in the south.

Dharmapāla could follow unchecked a career of aggressive militarism in the west mainly because of the collapse of the power of his great adversary, the Pratihāra king Vatsarāja. According to the Rāshtrakūṭa records, the latter was forced by Dhruva to leave his kingdom and betake himself to the trackless desert.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Vatsarāja took shelter in the heart of Rājputāna which was a stronghold of the Gurjara power and was known after them as Gurjaratrābhūmi.<sup>3</sup> The Pratihāras, however, had not given up their political ambitions. Vatsarāja's son and successor Nāgabhaṭa II made strenuous efforts to recover the lost grounds. He made alliance with the kings of Sindhu, Andhra, Vidarbha, and Kalinga. He thus seems to have organised a confederacy of states situated on the border of the Pāla and Rāshtrakūṭa empires, and presumably put himself as their champion against both.<sup>4</sup>

Having consolidated his position by his successful diplomatic policy, Nāgabhaṭa decided to try his strength against his mighty adversary Dharmapāla.<sup>5</sup> He marched against Kanauj where

<sup>1</sup> *RA.* 57; *EI.* xxiii. 217. The date of Govinda III's northern expedition has been fully discussed in App. II, dealing with Pāla chronology.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra* p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> *GP.* 8, 30. Dr. H. C. Ray's view that Mālava was at this time "under the strong grip of the Pratihāras" (*DHNI.* II. 845), is disproved, among other grounds, by the fact that Nāgabhaṭa is said to have seized by a sudden attack the hill-fort of the king of Mālava (*EI.* xviii. 108). This shows that the Pratihāras had lost hold of Mālava. The known facts, therefore, support the view, that after the Pratihāra king Vatsarāja was defeated by Dhruva, Mālava acknowledged the suzerainty of Dharmapāla, but later, when Govinda III invaded Northern India, it became a vassal state of the Rāshtrakūṭas. Cf. D. C. Ganguly, *Paramāras*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *GP.* 38-39.

<sup>5</sup> The struggle between Dharmapāla and Nāgabhaṭa II has been discussed at length with full references to authorities in *GP.* 40-44. The views stated there form the basis of the account in the text. Mr. N. N. Das Gupta has offered a different construction of the whole history (*JBORS.* xii. 361 ff.) His theory that Dharmapāla was defeated by Govinda III shortly before his encounter with

Dharmapāla had placed his protégé Chakravyudha on the throne. Chakravyudha was defeated<sup>1</sup> and fled to Dharmapāla. A battle between Dharmapāla and Nāgabhaṭa, with the empire of Northern India at stake, was now inevitable. That Nāgabhaṭa made extensive preparations for this enterprise, and was loyally helped by his feudal or allied chiefs, is known from several epigraphic records. The Jodhpur inscription of the Pratihāra chief Bāuka<sup>2</sup> informs us that his father Kakka gained renown by fighting with the Gaudas at Mudgagiri i.e. Monghyr. Vāhukadhavala, probably a feudatory chief of the Pratihāras, is said to have defeated a king called Dharma (i.e. Dharmapāla),<sup>3</sup> while another feudatory, Śankaragaṇa, claims to have conquered the Gauda country and presented it to his overlord.<sup>4</sup> As there are reasons to believe that all these chiefs were contemporaries of Nāgabhaṭa II, it may be safely presumed that they all took part in the campaign of Nāgabhaṭa against Dharmapāla.

It would appear, from the statement about Kakka, that a pitched battle was fought at Monghyr. It would mean therefore that Nāgabhaṭa had marched into the very heart of Dharmapāla's dominions. It is difficult to explain this weakness or lack of preparation on the part of Dharmapāla, and it is not unlikely that he was attacked by the king of Tibet about the same time (see *infra* p. 124).

If we are to trust the Pratihāra records, Nāgabhaṭa II must have inflicted a crushing defeat upon Dharmapāla. But the Pratihāra king was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victory. Once more the dream of founding a Pratihāra empire was shattered by the Rāshtrakūṭas. The triumphant career of Nāgabhaṭa II, like that of his father Vatsarāja, was cut short by the invasion of the hereditary enemy from the south.

It is not improbable that in his dire necessity Dharmapāla invoked the aid of the Rāshtrakūṭa king against the common enemy. It is equally likely that the growing power of Nāgabhaṭa alarmed Govinda III and he advanced to the north of his own accord. For we know from the Pratihāra records, that Nāgabhaṭa made alliance with the states on the border of the Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom, and captured the strongholds of Mālava. As Mālava commanded the route between the Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom and Northern India, and was probably then subordinate to the former, the Rāshtrakūṭa king might have accepted the challenge so defiantly thrown, and advanced to the north to settle his own

Nāgabhaṭa would no doubt explain the advance of Nāgabhaṭa II right up to Monghyr, but there does not appear to be sufficient reason to accept this view.

<sup>1</sup> *EI.* XVIII. 108, verse 9.

<sup>2</sup> *EI.* XVIII. 98, verse 24.

<sup>3</sup> *EI.* IX. 7, verse 9.

<sup>4</sup> *EI.* XV. 14, verse 14



accounts with the Pratihāra ruler. But whatever may be the cause, the effect of the war was decisive. Nāgabhaṭa's power was thoroughly crushed, and Govinda III made a triumphal march right across his dominions at least up to the Ganges-Jumna Doab.<sup>1</sup>

The victorious campaign of Govinda III against Nāgabhaṭa II saved Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha from imminent disaster. No wonder, that, as the Rāshtrakūṭa records tell us, both of them submitted, of their own accord, to Govinda III.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, circumstances would even justify the assumption that it was a pre-arranged affair, and that this was the price by which they purchased the timely intervention of the Rāshtrakūṭa monarch. In reality, this submission meant nothing. For, as they anticipated, Govinda III soon returned to the Deccan, and Dharmapāla was left free to re-organise his empire.

There is no reliable evidence in support of the view, generally accepted, that Nāgabhaṭa, after having defeated Chakrāyudha, annexed his kingdom and transferred his seat of government to Kanauj, which henceforth continued to be the capital of the dynasty.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, the only known record of Nāgabhaṭa, dated 815 A.D., was found in Buchkala, in the Jodhpur State, and the locality is said to be within his kingdom proper (*sva-vishaya*).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *GP.* 42-43; *RA.* 66; *TK.* 231.

<sup>2</sup> ".....to whom (Govinda III) .....those (kings) Dharma and Chakrāyudha surrendered of themselves" (*Sanjān Plates of Amoghavarsha* I, 1. 23. *El.* xviii. 253. Also cf. *RA.* 66; *TK.* 232). Mr. N. N. Das Gupta's view that Dharmapāla was defeated in a battle by Govinda III is not supported by the evidence that he quotes (*JBORS.* xii. 362-63). There are reasons to believe that Govinda III's success against Dharmapāla was too insignificant to be included in contemporary records, and was magnified at a later date (Cf. App. II).

<sup>3</sup> This view is held by Dr. R. S. Tripathi who also places the victories of Nāgabhaṭa II against Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha after his own defeat at the hands of Govinda III (*TK.* 232-33). In view of the decisive defeat inflicted upon Nāgabhaṭa II by Govinda III, this sequence of events does not appear to be reasonable. The only evidence in favour of the theory that Nāgabhaṭa II transferred his capital to Kanauj is a statement in the *Prabhāvaka-charita* that king Nāgāvaloka of Kānyakubja, the grandfather of Bhoja, died in 890 v.s. This Nāgāvaloka is probably Nāgabhaṭa II, but the statement about the capital may have been due to the fact that Kanauj was long known as the famous capital of the Pratihāras at the time when the book was composed. If Nāgabhaṭa really transferred his capital to Kanauj, it was very likely towards the close of his reign (c. 830 A.D.), after Dharmapāla had died and his son and successor Devapāla had enjoyed the position of supreme ruler of Northern India for a fairly long period, as is claimed in his records. But the date of the death of Nāgabhaṭa II, viz., 890 v.s. (=833 A.D.) is very doubtful as the earliest known date of his grandson Bhoja, is 836 A.D., i.e. only three years later. The authenticity of the passage in *Prabhāvaka-charita* may therefore be justly doubted.

<sup>4</sup> *El.* ix. 800.

Taking everything into consideration, the most probable view seems to be that Dharmapāla's empire did not suffer any considerable diminution during the rest of his life, and the power of the Pratihāras was mainly confined to Rājputāna. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that Dharmapāla spent his last days in peace, and we may well accept the statement, made in the Monghyr copper-plate (v. 12) of Devapāla, that there was no disturbance in the dominions when he succeeded his father Dharmapāla.

Dharmapāla fully deserved the rest after a long reign of stress and storm. His career was indeed a remarkable one. He inherited a small kingdom from his father, but his prowess and diplomacy, aided by good fortune, enabled him to establish a vast empire in Northern India. He had to fight many battles, and some times suffered serious reverses. On more than one occasion his position appeared precarious. But his undaunted spirit triumphed over all obstacles, and he launched Bengal into a career of imperial glory and military renown to which there has been no parallel before or since. The lure of the imperial city of Kanauj which proved the ruin of Śaśānka's kingdom paved the way for his grand success, and Bengal's dream of founding an empire in Northern India was at last fulfilled. We can only dimly realise its profound effect on Bengal. The country which only two generations ago was trampled under feet by a succession of foreign invaders, and suffered almost complete political disintegration, suddenly came to be the mistress of the whole of Northern India up to its furthest limits. It was nothing short of a miracle, and no wonder that the whole country was resounding with the tales of wonderful achievements of its remarkable ruler. The court-poet did not perhaps very much exaggerate the state of things when he wrote the following verse about Dharmapāla :

"Hearing his praises sung by the cowherds on the borders, by the foresters in the forests, by the villagers on the outskirts of villages, by the playing groups of children in every courtyard, in every market by the guardians of the weights, and in pleasure-houses by the parrots in the cages, he always bashfully turns aside and bows down his face."<sup>1</sup>

Dharmapāla assumed full imperial titles *Paramēśvara Paramabhattachāraka Mahārājādhirāja*, whereas his father is called only *Mahārājādhirāja*. That Dharmapāla introduced pomp and grandeur worthy of the empire he had built up, would be evident from the following description of what looks like an Imperial *Durbar* held in Pāṭaliputra :

"Now—from his royal camp of victory, pitched at Pāṭaliputra, where the manifold fleets of boats proceeding on the path of the Bhāgirathī make it seem

<sup>1</sup> Khalimpur copper-plate, v. 13 (*El.* iv. 252).

as if a series of mountain-tops had been sunk to build another causeway (for Rāma's passage); where, the brightness of daylight being darkened by densely packed arrays of rutting elephants, the rainy season (with its masses of black clouds) might be taken constantly to prevail; where the firmament is rendered grey by the dust, dug up by the hard hoofs of unlimited troops of horses presented by many kings of the north; and where the earth is bending beneath the weight of the innumerable foot-soldiers of all the kings of Jambudvīpa, assembled to render homage to their supreme lord."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the obvious exaggeration of the poet, the above passage is a fair index of the imperial vision of Bengal towards the close of the reign of Dharmapāla.

It is extremely unfortunate that we know so little about the personal history of Dharmapāla, except his political and military achievements. The Khalimpur copper-plate shows that he must have reigned for at least thirty-two years. Tāranātha's statement that he ruled for sixty-four years cannot be credited in the absence of any corroborative evidence. The Monghyr copper-plate informs us that he married Raṇṇādevī, the daughter of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Parabala. This Rāshtrakūṭa king is usually identified with the king of that name who was ruling in Central India in 861 A.D., but this seems very doubtful.<sup>2</sup> It is very likely that Dharmapāla's father-in-law belonged to the well-known Rāshtrakūṭa family of the Deccan,<sup>3</sup> but no king of that family with Parabala as name or *biruda* is known to us so far.

The Khalimpur copper-plate refers to Yuvarāja Tribhuvanapāla as *dūtaka* of the Grant. Whether he is identical with Devapāla, who succeeded Dharmapāla, or a different person, is not known to us. In the latter case, he was probably the eldest son of Dharmapāla who either predeceased his father, or was superseded by Devapāla under circumstances not known to us.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pathāri Pillar inscription, *EI.* ix. 248ff. The date of this inscription has been read as *Samvat* 917. The figure for hundred is not quite clear on the published facsimile, but the reading has been accepted by all scholars. Now the accession of Devapāla, son of Raṇṇādevī and Dharmapāla, is generally assigned to c. 810 or 815 A.D. Unless Devapāla was a minor, of which there is no evidence, he must have been born some time before 795 A.D., and his mother's birth cannot be placed later than 780 A.D. Her father Parabala, therefore, must have been born about 760 A.D. and was therefore more than hundred years old when the Pathāri inscription was engraved. Even if we assume that Devapāla was a child at the time of accession, we have to believe that Dharmapāla married, at a fairly advanced age, a young girl of twenty or thereabouts, and that his father-in-law survived him for nearly half a century. These may not be impossible, but are certainly very unusual. On the whole, the identity of Dharmapāla's father-in-law and the king Parabala of the Pathāri inscription must be regarded as doubtful (cf. *RA.* 55, f.n. 19).

<sup>3</sup> The late Dr. Fleet proposed to identify him with Govinda III (*BG.* i. Part II, p. 394), but he is not known to have any *biruda* like Parabala.

Dharmapāla had a younger brother named Vākpāla. It is claimed in a later record that he was a valiant hero and destroyed the enemies of his brother. It may be presumed that Vākpāla was the commander of the royal army. Similarly, we learn from another later record that a Brāhmaṇa named Garga was the minister of Dharmapāla. In this record of his descendant, Garga is given the credit of making Dharmapāla, the lord of the east, ultimately the lord of the other directions too. These credits, claimed on behalf of the general and minister of Dharmapāla, may, no doubt, have some foundation, but we must accept them with caution, specially as they come from interested parties.

According to Tibetan tradition, Dharmapāla was a great patron of Buddhism. He is said to have founded the famous Vikramaśīla *vihāra* in Magadha on the top of a hill on the bank of the Ganges. It had 114 teachers in different subjects and included a central temple, surrounded by 107 others, all enclosed by a boundary wall.<sup>1</sup> According to Buston,<sup>2</sup> Dharmapāla also built a magnificent monastery at Odantapūrī, but according to Tāranātha,<sup>3</sup> it was founded by either Gopāla or Devapāla. Curiously enough, the legend related by Buston about the foundation of Odantapūrī *vihāra* by Dharmapāla is exactly the same as is told by Tāranātha about the foundation of a *vihāra* at Somapūrī in Varendra by Devapāla. Now the recent archaeological excavations<sup>4</sup> carried out at Paharpur, in Rajshahi district, leave no doubt that its ruins represent the famous Somapura-*vihāra*, and the name of the place is still preserved in the neighbouring village called Ompur. According to the short inscriptions on some clay seals found in Paharpur, the Somapura-*vihāra* was founded by Dharmapāla. Tāranātha says that Dharmapāla founded fifty religious schools.<sup>5</sup> As already stated above, Dharmapāla was the patron of the great Buddhist writer Haribhadra.<sup>6</sup> It reflects great credit upon the emperor, that amid his pre-occupations with war and politics he could devote his thought and activities to these pious and peaceful pursuits.

<sup>1</sup> *Tar.*, p. 217. According to other traditions, however, Devapāla is regarded as its founder (Cordier-Catalogue, III. 321-22).

The reference to the *Vihāra* as *Śrīmad-Vikramaśīla-deva-mahāvihāra* (Mitra-Nepal, 229) shows that Vikramaśīla was another name or *biruda* of Dharmapāla (or Devapāla) who founded it.

<sup>2</sup> P. 137.

<sup>3</sup> P. 206.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of these excavations cf. *ASM.* No. 55 (Paharpur—K. N. Dikshit).

<sup>5</sup> P. 217.

<sup>6</sup> Buston, pp. 156 ff.

Although Dharmapāla was a Buddhist king, he was not hostile to Brahmanical religion in any way. He granted land for the worship of a Brahmanical god (Ins. No. 2) and followed the rules of caste laid down in the scriptures (No. 6, v. 5). The appointment of a Brāhmaṇa Garga as his minister, whose descendants occupied the post for several generations (No. 16), shows that politics was not influenced in any way by religion.

## 2. Devapāla (c. 810–850 A.D.)

*Paramesvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja* Devapāla, who succeeded to the throne about 810 A.D., was fully endowed with the prowess and other qualities of his father. The available records seem to indicate that Devapāla not only maintained the empire intact, but even extended its boundaries. The most interesting of these is the Bādāl Pillar inscription (No. 16) which contains an eulogy of five generations of hereditary Brahman ministers who served under four rulers of the Pāla dynasty beginning from Dharmapāla. Extravagant pretensions are put forward in this record on behalf of Darbhapāṇi and his grandson Kedāramiśra who both served under Devapāla. It was Darbhapāṇi's diplomacy, so we are told, which enabled Devapāla to exact tributes from the whole of Northern India, from the Himālaya to the Vindhya mountains, and from the Eastern to the Western seas (v. 5). It was again the intelligence of Kedāramiśra that enabled Devapāla to enjoy the sea-girt earth after having exterminated the Utkalas, curbed the pride of the Hūnas, and destroyed the haughtiness of the Draviḍa and Gurjara lords (v. 13).

Similar credit is given to the general of Devapāla in the record of a descendant of the former (Ins. No. 14). We are told that on the approach of Devapāla's forces, under his brother Jayapāla, the king of Utkala fled from his capital city, and the king of Prāgjyotiṣa submitted without any fight (v. 6). Devapāla's own Grant (No. 6) shows that his career of victory led him as far as Kāmboja in the west and Vindhya mountains in the south.

To whomsoever might belong the credit of these remarkable achievements, they undoubtedly testify to the brilliance of Devapāla's reign. It appears that he peacefully inherited the vast empire of his father and firmly established his authority (Ins. No. 6, v. 12). But it was soon apparent that he could not long maintain the extensive empire left by his father merely by peaceful and diplomatic methods, as his minister Darbhapāṇi claims to have done. In those unsettled times, nothing but a policy of blood and iron could have checked the disruptive forces within the empire and aggressive

designs of ambitious neighbours. So Devapāla's long reign of about forty years must have witnessed a series of military campaigns, including those against the Prāggyotishas, Utkalas, Hūṇas, Gurjaras, and Draviḍas.

Prāggyotisha is a well-known name of the Brahmaputra valley, and the province or a part of it was also called Kāmarūpa.<sup>1</sup> According to Hiuen Tsang, Kāmarūpa included the whole of Assam valley and extended up to the Karatoyā river in the west. According to the Bhagalpur copper-plate (No. 14), when Jayapāla set out on a conquering expedition the king of Prāggyotisha lived in happiness for a long time by accepting the order (of Jayapāla) to desist from warlike preparations. It is thus evident that the king of Assam accepted the suzerainty of Devapāla and was left unmolested. This king was probably either Harjara or his father Prālam-bha.<sup>2</sup>

The conquest of Utkala was, however, more thorough. In addition to the passage quoted above about the flight of the Utkala king from his capital, the Bādāl Pillar inscription informs us that the Utkalas were exterminated. There might have been one or more expeditions against Utkala, and the kingdom was thoroughly subjugated. Tāranātha informs us that Orissa, like Bengal, suffered from internal disruption,<sup>3</sup> shortly before Gopāla was elected king. But like the Pālas in Bengal, the Kara dynasty restored the solidarity of the kingdom. Śubhakara, the third king of this dynasty who bore imperial titles, has been identified by S. Lévi with the king of Wu-cha who sent an autographed manuscript to the Chinese emperor Te-tsung in 795 A.D. His son Śivakara also bore imperial titles, and ruled in Orissa.<sup>4</sup> After him nearly two hundred years elapsed before we hear of another Kara king in Orissa who might or might not have been descended from the earlier Karas.<sup>5</sup> The Pālas probably conquered Utkala during or immediately after the reign of

<sup>1</sup> In the Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva (*El.* II. 318), the village granted is said to be situated in Kāmarūpa-maṇḍala and Prāggyotisha-bhukti. This shows that Kāmarūpa was regarded as a smaller unit within Prāggyotisha which necessarily included a larger area. It is, however, generally accepted that the same country was known as Prāggyotisha in ancient times and as Kāmarūpa in mediæval times (*HK.* I ff.).

<sup>2</sup> For the contemporary history of Assam, cf. *DHNI.* I. 241 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Tar.*, p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> Chaurasi copper-plate. *JBORS.* XIV. 202 ff.

<sup>5</sup> The chronology of the Kara kings is involved in difficulties. For the view adopted in the text, cf. *Orissa* by R. D. Banerji, Vol. I, Ch. XI; *JAHRS.* x. 56. According to Vinayak Misra, the Kara dynasty came to an end about 794 A.D. with the reign of Daṇḍimahādevi (*Orissa under the Bhauma Kings*, 71).

Śivakara, and their boast that they had exterminated the Utkalas was perhaps not altogether unjustified.

The Hūnas were the nomadic tribe from Central Asia that played a dominant rôle in the history of India during the latter half of the fifth and the first half of the sixth century A.D. After that they had ceased to be a great power, but ruled over one or more small principalities. One of these was situated in the seventh century A.D. in Uttarāpatha, near the Himālayas.<sup>1</sup> It was probably this principality which was successfully invaded by Devapāla.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter he proceeded up to Kāmboja, which was to the north-west of the Punjab and immediately to the north of Gandhāra. The Hūna principality and Kāmboja were both situated on the outskirts of the Pāla empire and this sufficiently explains Devapāla's hostility with them. These detailed conquests show that Devapāla not only maintained intact the empire he had inherited from his father, but also extended its boundaries by the conquest of Assam and Orissa on one side, and Kāmboja and Hūna principalities on the other. The claim that he ruled from the Himālaya to the Vindhya, and from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, was perhaps not very far from truth, and was in any case a pardonable exaggeration, and not a 'mere bombast'.<sup>3</sup>

The Gurjaras mentioned in the Bādāl Pillar inscription were undoubtedly the Pratihāras, the old enemy of the Pālas. We have seen above (*supra* pp. 106, 112) how the crushing defeat inflicted by the Rāshtrakūṭas forced the Pratihāras to confine their activities within Rājputāna and Dharmapāla enjoyed his mighty empire undisturbed by them. Devapāla also appears to have enjoyed a brief respite from their hostile activities during the first part of his reign. For, as we have seen above (*supra* p. 112), apart from a doubtful reference in a Jaina text, there is nothing to prove that Nāgabhaṭa II recovered his power and occupied Kanauj, and if he did so it was probably not long before the date of his death (833 A.D.) as given in the same text. The records of the Pratihāras show that this did not revive the old glory of the family. The reign of Nāgabhaṭa's son Rāmabhadra was an inglorious one, and there are indirect evidences to show that he suffered severe reverses in the hands of his enemies, who even for a time ravaged his own dominions.<sup>4</sup> Rāmabhadra's son and successor Bhoja, however, infused a new

<sup>1</sup> HC. Ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> A territorial unit called Hūna-maṇḍala in Malwa is referred to in an inscription of the Paramāra king Vākpatirāja (EI. xxiii. 102). Both Vākpati and Sindhurāja are said to have defeated the Hūnas. Thus there was probably also a Hūna principality in Malwa.

<sup>3</sup> TK 240.

<sup>4</sup> GP. 45-46, TK. 236-37.

energy and strength among the Pratihāras, and seems to have recovered some of the territories lost by his father. The Barah and Daulatpura copper-plates show that he had occupied Kanauj and recovered Kālañjara-maṇḍala by 836 A.D., and Gurjaratrā, his ancestral territories in Rājputāna, by 843 A.D.<sup>1</sup> But, evidently, his success was short-lived. For we find Gurjaratrā in possession of another branch of the Pratihāra family in 861 A.D., and Bhoja was defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭas some time before 867 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to be almost certain that the lord of Gurjaras, whose pride was curbed by Devapāla, was no other than Bhoja I. According to the Bādāl Pillar inscription, this must have occurred fairly late in the reign of Devapāla, for the credit of this achievement is taken by Kedāramisra, the grandson of his first minister Darbhapāni. We may, therefore, fix the date of this event between 840 and 850 A.D.<sup>3</sup> It was probably shortly after this that Bhoja was defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭas. These successive defeats so weakened his power, that even Gurjaratrā, the territory round Jodhpur in Rājputāna, passed out of his hands. Thus in spite of a short period of trouble, Devapāla had not much to fear from the Pratihāras, and during his long reign that eternal enemy of the Pālas was kept in check.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GP. 48; TK. 237-38.

<sup>2</sup> GP. 48-50; TK. 242-43.

<sup>3</sup> GP. 49-50; TK. 240-41.

<sup>4</sup> It may be surmised that in his fight against Bhoja, Devapāla was helped by the Chandellas of Khajurāho. There is a tradition that the founder of this dynasty supplanted the Pratihāras (V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 3rd ed., p. 390). This statement has not been believed by the historians. But if we remember that Bhoja was ruling over Kālañjara-maṇḍala in 836 A.D. (which might well have included Khajurāho about 50 miles from Kālañjara), that he was defeated by Devapāla about 840 A.D., and that since then the Chandellas were in continuous occupation of Khajurāho and the neighbourhood (even though they had later to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Pratihāras), it would not be unreasonable to hold that the Chandellas had helped Devapāla in his fight against Bhoja, and were rewarded, after the latter's defeat, with the sovereignty of the territory near Khajurāho, perhaps under the suzerainty of Devapāla. Vākpati, the second king in the traditional genealogical list of the Chandellas, is said to have made the Vindhya his pleasure-mount (Khajurāho Ins. v. 13, *EI.* i. 126) and Vākpati's son Vijaya is said to have, like Rāma, in his warlike expeditions reached even the southernmost point of India, presumably for the benefit of an ally, as the epithet '*suhrid-upakṛiti-dakṣha*' shows (Khajurāho Ins. v. 20, *EI.* i. 142). Now Devapāla also claims to have reached the Vindhya region and, as we shall see, there are reasons to believe that he sent an expedition to the extreme south. It may be presumed, therefore, that the earlier Chandella kings were allies of Devapāla. This strengthens the view that they might have ousted Bhoja from Kālañjara with the help of the Pāla king.

Dr. H. C. Ray thinks that the Chandella kings referred to above were feudatory chiefs, perhaps of Bhoja (*DHNI.* 670-671). Of this there is no



Lastly, we come to the Draviḍas who were also defeated by Devapāla. They are usually identified with the Rāshtrakūṭas, and as the Rāshtrakūṭas were, like the Gurjaras, the rivals of the Pālas, the reference may be to a successful fight with them.<sup>1</sup> It would then appear that Devapāla had to fight with both the hereditary enemies for maintaining his empire, and he was evidently more successful than his father. His Rāshtrakūṭa rival was undoubtedly Amoghavarsha.<sup>2</sup>

The term Draviḍa is, however, usually applied to denote, not the Deccan plateau which formed the Rāshtrakūṭa dominions proper, but the South Indian peninsula. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the Draviḍa ruler defeated by Devapāla belonged to this region, and in that case he was most probably his contemporary Pāṇḍya king Śrī-Māra Śrī-Vallabha who ruled about 815-862 A.D. According to the Sinnamanur Plates, this Pāṇḍya king repulsed a hostile confederation consisting of the Gaṅgas, Pallavas, Chōlas, Kalingas, Magadhas, and others at a place identified with modern Kumbakonam. The Magadhas in the above list can only refer to the forces of the Pāla king who was in occupation of Magadha during this period. The conquest of Utkala had brought Devapāla into contact with the Kalingas and there was every inducement on his part to enter into a close political association with them, and, through them, with the other powers mentioned above. For these powers were hostile to the Rāshtrakūṭas, and were repeatedly defeated by them during the reigns of Dhruva and Govinda III. The common enmity to the Rāshtrakūṭas would have cemented the alliance, and the southern powers, whose dominions were ruthlessly devastated by the Rāshtrakūṭas, would naturally try to gain the support of such a powerful ruler as Devapāla.

It appears from the Velvikkuḍi Grant that the Pāṇḍya king was at one time a member of a similar confederacy of Eastern kings which defeated the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa I at Venbai. But evidently he had seceded from it and was an object of its attack. The Sinnamanur Plates refer to his success against the confederacy

definite evidence, though it is the general view (GP. 55). As Dhaṅga ascended the throne about 854 A.D., Vākpati and Vijaya, who were removed respectively five and four generations from him, may be regarded as contemporaries of Devapāla.

<sup>1</sup> *BI* 205

<sup>2</sup> Devapāla's success must have been facilitated by the internal discords in the Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom. For details cf. *RA*, 73-77. Dr. Altekar's wrong in his statement that the Pāla records claim that Nārāyaṇapāla had defeated a Draviḍa king (*Ibid.* p. 77). The claim is really made on behalf of Devapāla. Dr. Altekar's identification of the Draviḍa king with Amoghavarsha seems, however, to be quite reasonable, though his view about the struggle between the Pālas and the Rāshtrakūṭas, based on the wrong assumption, is open to doubt.

at Kumbakonam, but it is just possible that there were other episodes in connection with this campaign which were less favourable to him.<sup>1</sup>

It is thus quite likely that the Draviḍa king, whose pride was curbed by Devapāla, was the Pāṇḍya ruler Śrī-Māra Śrī-Vallabha. This view is strengthened by verse 15 of the Monghyr copper-plate (No. 6) which describes the empire of Devapāla as bounded by the Himālayas in the north and Rāmeśvar Setubandha in the south. It is no doubt an exaggeration, but there would be at least some basis for this, if we accept the above view. Some military victory near Rāmeśvar in the Pāṇḍya kingdom could be easily magnified by the court-poet, and would offer some explanation of the statement about the extent of his empire; but it would be very curious indeed that such a statement should be made without absolutely any basis of fact. Similarly, the claim of the Chandella king Vijaya that he reached, in course of his conquest, the extreme south where Rāma built his bridge, would be equally absurd unless we suppose that he did this in company with some powerful king; and from what has been said above,<sup>2</sup> this king may be Devapāla. It is difficult to believe that two court-poets writing in different countries at different times should concoct the same baseless story about two different kings. The available evidences do not enable us to make any positive statement, but the hypothesis about a victorious expedition of Devapāla in the southernmost part of India cannot now be ruled out as altogether fantastic.

Devapāla ruled for at least 35 years<sup>3</sup> and his reign may be placed between 810 and 850 A.D. Under him the Pāla empire reached the height of its glory. His suzerainty was acknowledged over the whole of Northern India from Assam to the borders of Kashmir, and his victorious forces marched from the Indus to the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra, and from the Himālayas to the Vindhya, perhaps even to the southernmost extremity of India. His name and fame were known far outside India, and king Bālaputradeva of the Śailendra dynasty ruling in Java, Sumatra, and Malay Peninsula sent an ambassador to him.<sup>4</sup> The object of this embassy was to ask for a grant of five villages with which the

<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis of Devapāla's military expedition to the extreme south of India is based on Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri's very interesting paper "The Pūrvarāja of the Velvikkuḍi Grant" (*Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar Commemoration Volume*, 1936, pp. 197 ff). Cf. also *supra* p. 106, f.n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 119, f.n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The Nālandā Copperplate (No. 7) is dated in the 39th or 35th Year. (See App. 1).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Śailendra king proposed to endow a monastery he had built at Nālandā. The monastery of Nālandā was in those days the seat of international Buddhist culture, and the Pāla emperors, as its guardians, held a high position in the Buddhist world. Devapāla was a great patron of Buddhism and he granted the request of the Śailendra king. His interest in the Nālandā monastery and deep devotion to the Buddhist faith are also known from the Ghoshrawa inscription (No. 8). It records that Indragupta, a Brahman of Nagarahāra (Jelalabad) and a learned Buddhist priest, received ovation from Devapāla and was appointed the head of the Nālandā monastery.

A general review of the Pāla kingdom towards the close of Devapāla's reign is given by the Arab traveller and merchant Sulaiman, who made several voyages to India and wrote an account of it in 851 A.D. The Pāla kingdom is referred to as Ruhmi (Rahma, according to Al'Masūdi). The Pāla king is said to be at war with his neighbours, the Rāshtrakūṭas and the Gurjara-Pratihāras. His troops were more numerous than those of his adversaries. In his military campaigns he took 50,000 elephants, and ten to fifteen thousand men in his army were employed in fulling and washing cloths.<sup>1</sup>

Reference has already been made above to the nature of Dharmapāla's empire. So far as we can judge from the available records, Devapāla, too, does not seem to have exercised any direct administrative control over any territory outside Bengal and Bihar. In the case of the Imperial Guptas and Gurjara-Pratihāras, not only inscriptions all over Northern India invoke their name as suzerain, but we have also the records of their officers governing remote territories like Kathiawar peninsula. No such records of the two Pāla emperors have yet been discovered beyond the confines of the modern provinces of Bengal and Bihar. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that so far as the rest of the imperial territories were concerned, they were governed by local rulers who acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pālas. This is corroborated by v. 8 of the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (No. 6).<sup>2</sup>

In this connection, it is interesting to note that reference is made to a Pāla ruler, Yuvarāja by name, in the *Udayasundarī*-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *E&D.* i. 5, 25; S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, pp. 4-6. For an explanation why the Pāla kingdom is referred to as Ruhmi or Rahma, cf. *IHQ.* xvi. 232 ff.

<sup>2</sup> According to this verse, Dharmapāla, after his *digvijaya*, removed the sorrows of the conquered kings by presenting them excellent rewards and permitted them to return to their own kingdoms.

*kathā* composed by Sodḍhala.<sup>1</sup> We learn from this book that a famous poet, Abhinanda by name, graced his court.<sup>2</sup> The *Rāmacharita*,<sup>3</sup> composed by this poet Abhinanda, gives more details about Yuvarāja who is described as a great conqueror. He had the epithet Hāravarsha, and was the son of Vikramaśīla. He is also referred to as the ornament of the Pāla family (*Pāla-kula-chandra*, *Pāla-kula-pradīpa* etc.) founded by Dharmapāla (*Dharma-pāla-kula-kairava-kānan-endu*).<sup>4</sup>

These epithets leave no doubt that Yuvarāja Hāravarsha belonged to the Pāla family of Bengal. According to the *Rāmacharita*, he was a powerful king, a statement which is also corroborated by the *Udayasundarī-kathā*. The question, therefore, naturally arises whether he is to be identified with a known Pāla king, or regarded as a ruler over some territory outside Bengal and Bihar. It has been suggested that Vikramaśīla, the father of Yuvarāja, was another name of Dharmapāla who founded the Vikramaśīla monastery, and Hāravarsha is identical with Devapāla.<sup>5</sup> Dr. D. C. Ganguly infers from the epithet Hāravarsha that he was connected with some Rāshtrakūṭa kingdom. As Parabala, the Rāshtrakūṭa king of Central India, was the father of Dharmapāla's queen, Dr. Ganguly suggests that Yuvarāja might have ruled over that territory.<sup>6</sup> None of these conjectures except perhaps the identity of Dharmapāla (or Devapāla) and Vikramaśīla can be supported by positive evidence. There are some grounds for the belief that the poet Abhinanda was an inhabitant of Bengal,<sup>7</sup> and in that case Yuvarāja Hāravarsha may be the well-known Pāla king Devapāla or his son. But if Yuvarāja Hāravarsha ruled over any territory outside Bengal and Bihar, this will be the only instance where any part of the Pāla empire was directly administered by the Pāla kings or members of their family. In any case, the history of Yuvarāja Hāravarsha is an interesting episode in the

<sup>1</sup> Published in Gaekwad Oriental Series.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Published in Gaekwad Series.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. i. 110 (p. 10); Introductory verses to chs. viii (p. 63) and vi (p. 47); concluding verses of chs. x (p. 91), xi (p. 102), xxvi (p. 234), vi (p. 55), and xviii (p. 253).

<sup>5</sup> Introduction to *Rāmacharita*, pp. xx-xxiii. That Vikramaśīla was possibly a *biruda* of Dharmapāla or Devapāla rests on some positive evidence, presumably unknown to the editor (*supra*, p. 115, fn. 1). But the patron of the poet is also called Prithvipāla in the concluding verse of Canto 2, and Prithvipāla in the last verse of Canto 10 (ms. C) or 18 (ms. A). This may be another name of Hāravarsha. In that case he must be different from Devapāla.

<sup>6</sup> *Bhāratavarsha*, Śrāvāṇa, 1340, pp. 247 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Introduction to *Rāmacharita*.

history of the Pālas. All that we can infer about the period of his rule from literary evidence, is that he flourished certainly before the eleventh century A.D. and probably before the tenth.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, a brief reference may be made to the relation between Bengal and Tibet during the reigns of the first three Pāla kings. The political relation between Tibet and India down to the middle of the eighth century A.D. has been discussed above (see *supra* pp. 91-93). In spite of the victories of Lalitāditya, the Tibetan rulers continued their aggressive policy, and the Tibetan chronicles, of a later date, record their great achievements in India during the period 755-836 A.D.

The Tibetan king Khri-srong-lde-btsan (755-97 A.D.), regarded as an incarnation of Bodhisatva Mañjuśrī, was a very powerful king. According to the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, "he subdued all the provinces on the four frontiers" including "China in the east and India in the south."<sup>2</sup> In a Tibetan text, composed not much later than the ninth century A.D., his son Mu-tig Btsan-po is said to have brought under his sway two or three (parts of) Jambudvīpa.<sup>3</sup> This somewhat vague statement is supplemented by the following details in the same text :

"In the south the Indian kings there established, the Raja Dharma-dpal and Drahu-dpun, both waiting in their lands under order to shut up their armies, yielded the Indian kingdom in subjection to Tibet : the wealth of the Indian country, gems and all kinds of excellent provisions, they punctually paid. The two great kings of India, upper and lower, out of kindness to themselves (or in obedience to him), pay honour to commands."<sup>4</sup>

The king Dharma-dpal in the above passage undoubtedly refers to the Pāla king Dharmapāla. As regards Drahu-dpun, Dr. Thomas, who edited the text, suggests that it might mean "nephew, or grandson, Drahu," but it does not help us in identifying him.

The next important king Ral-pa-can (c. 817-c. 836 A.D.), according to the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, conquered India as far as the

<sup>1</sup> This lower limit is furnished by the date of Soḍḍhala who was a contemporary of both Chhittarāja and Mummunirāja, rulers of Konkanā, whose known dates are respectively 1026 A.D. and 1060 A.D. (Introduction to *Udayasundarikathā*, p. 1). The editor of *Rāmācharita* places Abhinanda and Hāra-varsha before 900 A.D. on the ground "that Soḍḍhala in his chronology of famous poets of ancient India beginning from Vālmiki down to his own time places Abhinanda before Rājasekhara" (pp. xx-xxi).

<sup>2</sup> Francke, *Antiquities of Tibet*, Part II, p. 87. Dr. L. Petech, *Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh*. IIIQ. xv. 65.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents concerning Chinese Turkestan*, p. 270.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 272-78.

**Gaṅgāsāgara.** This has been taken to represent the mouth of the Ganges.<sup>1</sup>

The facts culled above from the Tibetan texts throw interesting light upon the political relation between India and Tibet during the first century of Pāla rule. How far the Tibetan claims of conquest and supremacy in Indian plains may be regarded as historical facts, it is difficult to say. For the Indian sources contain no reference to any military campaign from Tibet, far less to the exercise of political authority by its king in India proper. While, therefore, we must suspend our final judgment about Tibetan conquest and supremacy in India until fresh evidence is available, we must not ignore the possibility that perhaps the course of events in Bengal during 750-850 A.D. was influenced by Tibet to a much larger extent than we are apt to imagine.<sup>2</sup>

### III. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE EMPIRE.

The glory and brilliance of the Pāla empire did not long survive the death of Devapāla. The rule of his successors, whose names and approximate dates are given below, was marked by a steady process of decline and disintegration which reduced the Pālas almost to an insignificant political power in North India.

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Vīgrahapāla I  |                 |
| or                | c. 850-854 A.D. |
| Śūrapāla I        |                 |
| 2. Nārāyaṇapāla   | c. 854-908 A.D. |
| 3. Rājyapāla      | c. 908-940 A.D. |
| 4. Gopāla II      | c. 940-960 A.D. |
| 5. Vīgrahapāla II | c. 960-988 A.D. |

<sup>1</sup> Francke. *op. cit.* 89-90. Francke assigns to Ral-pa-can the date 804-16 A.D., but Dr. Petech (*op. cit.* 81) gives the date 817-836 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> The alleged victories of Khri-srong-lde-btsan (755-97 A.D.), for instance, fit in well with what we know of the political condition in Bengal about the middle of the eighth century A.D., and might have played no inconsiderable part in placing a Buddhist ruler on its throne. The specific mention of Dharmapāla's submission to this Tibetan ruler or his son is of special interest. Whatever we might think of the Tibetan claim, a conflict between Dharmapāla and the Tibetan ruler is not an improbable one and might explain the former's defeat by Nāgabhaṭa II. In this connection we might recall the tradition that Dharmapāla occupied the throne of Nepāla which, we know, was under the political subjection of Tibet during the greater part of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. The expedition of Dharmapāla to Kedāra and Nepāla may also have some connection with Tibetan aggression. The alleged conquests of Ral-pa-can (817-836) might explain the weakness of the Pāla kingdom under Devapāla which enabled Bhoja to conquer Kanauj some time before 836 A.D. The advance of the Tibetans up to

Devapāla was succeeded by Vīgrahapāla. There is some dispute among scholars regarding the relationship between the two, but the most probable view seems to be that Vīgrahapāla was the nephew of Devapāla, and not his son (*cf.* App. iv). According to the genealogy preserved in the Grants of Nārāyaṇapāla and subsequent kings, Dharmapāla had a younger brother named Vākpāla, who was evidently his general and fought his enemies in all directions. Vākpāla's son Jayapāla was the great general of Devapāla, and conquered Orissa and Assam for his royal cousin. Vīgrahapāla, who ascended the throne after the death of Devapāla, was probably the son of this Jayapāla, though some take him to be the son of Devapāla.

For the present, we are absolutely in the dark regarding the circumstances which led to this change in the line of succession. It might have been due to the absence of any heir of Devapāla, although this does not appear to be very likely. For the Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla (No. 6) shows that he had installed his son Rājyapāla as Crown-Prince, and that this son was alive in the year 33 of his reign, *i.e.* not more than seven or eight years before his death. Of course, Rājyapāla might have died during this interval, as appears to have been the case with Tribhuvanapāla mentioned above. On the other hand, we cannot altogether eliminate the possibility of an internal dispute regarding succession<sup>1</sup> in which the general Jayapāla might have placed his own son on the throne with the support of his army. For the sudden collapse of the Pāla Empire naturally leads to the presumption of a catastrophe of this kind, and the view of an internal disruption is supported by the mention of the kingdoms of Āṅga, Vaṅga, and Magadha in a Rāshtrakūṭa record dated 866 A.D.

Vīgrahapāla, who inherited the throne and the vast empire of Devapāla, is described in very vague and general terms as having destroyed his enemies. The old Kedāramiśra continued as minister. But the Bādāl Pillar inscription (No. 16) which attributes to his diplomacy the great military victories of Devapāla, has nothing to

the mouth of the Ganges would account for the sudden collapse of the Pāla kingdom under Nārāyaṇapāla, if we could push forward the dates of the incident by two decades, which is not very unreasonable in view of the proved inaccuracies in the chronology of the Tibetan chronicles. Lastly, the usurpation of a part of the Pāla kingdom by Kāmboja chiefs in the tenth century A.D. may be ultimately traceable to the Tibetan expeditions, for Kāmboja was an Indian name for Tibet (*cf.* App. v). But all these are mere conjectures and speculations for the present, and undue stress should not be laid on them till corroborative evidence is forthcoming.

<sup>1</sup> This view finds support in the story of Yuvarāja Hāravarsha referred to *supra* p. 123, if he is regarded as the son of Devapāla, and we accept his association with the Rāshtrakūṭa Kingdom in Central India as suggested by Dr. D. C. Ganguly.

say of the next king whom it calls Śūrapāla. Śūrapāla was obviously another name of Vigrahapāla,<sup>1</sup> and all that the Bādāl Pillar inscription tells us about him is that he attended the sacrificial ceremonies performed by his minister, and poured holy water over his own head for the welfare of his empire. It offers a strong contrast between the warlike Devapāla and his successor who was evidently of a pacific and religious disposition. Vigrahapāla maintained this attitude till the last. He abdicated the throne in favour of his son Nārāyaṇapāla and retired to a religious life.<sup>2</sup> He had married a princess of the Haihaya family named Lajjā.<sup>3</sup>

Nārāyaṇapāla also resembled his father rather than his grand-uncle. He had Kedāramiśra's son Guravamiśra as his minister, but the Bādāl Pillar inscription records no glorious military achievement to his credit. The Bhagalpur copper-plate grant (No. 14), issued in the 17th regnal year of Nārāyaṇapāla, also refers to his prowess in only vague and general terms, but does not mention any specific conquest. Although he ruled for no less than fifty-four years (No. 15), we have not the least evidence of any military victory of Nārāyaṇapāla. All these raise a strong presumption about the weakness of these two Pāla rulers, and this presumption is fully borne out by external evidences, particularly the history of the Rāshtrakūṭas and the Pratihāras, the two hereditary enemies of the Pālas.

As regards the Rāshtrakūṭas,<sup>4</sup> we learn from the Sirur inscription, dated 866 A.D., that the ruler or rulers of Aṅga, Vāṅga, and Magadha paid homage to king Amoghavarsha (814-c.880 A.D.). The internal history of the Rāshtrakūṭas makes it highly improbable that Amoghavarsha could have undertaken an expedition against the Pāla ruler before he had defeated the king of Veṅgi some time about 860 A.D. It is likely that after the conquest of Veṅgi, the Rāshtrakūṭa forces proceeded along the eastern coast and invaded the Pāla kingdom from the south. It was perhaps of the type of the occasional military raids of the Rāshtrakūṭas into Northern

<sup>1</sup> N. Vasu regarded Śūrapāla as the son of Devapāla (*VJI.* 216), but the identity of Śūrapāla and Vigrahapāla is upheld by all scholars (*GL.* 82 f.n.; *BI.* 217).

<sup>2</sup> *Ins.* No. 14, v. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ins.* No. 14, v. 9. According to Epic and Puranic traditions, Haihaya was a great-grandson of Yadu. His descendants, called Haihayas, were divided into many groups. But the most important line, during the historical period, that claimed to belong to this family, was the Kalachuri. There were two branches of Kalachuris ruling in Northern India at the time when Vigrahapāla ruled, viz., those of Gorakhpur and Dāhala (or Tripuri). The queen of Vigrahapāla presumably belonged to one of these families.

<sup>4</sup> References and authorities for the statements about the Rāshtrakūṭas will be found in *RA.* 75-78.



India, and had no permanent effect. But it must have considerably weakened the military power and the political prestige of the Pālas. The conquest of a portion of Rāḍhā by the Śulki king *Mahārājādhirāja* Raṇastambha of Orissa may also be assigned to the same period,<sup>1</sup> and may not be altogether unconnected with the Rāshtrakūṭa invasion.

These reverses of the Pālas in the south probably created a favourable opportunity for the Pratihāra king Bhojadeva to renew his ambitious efforts which were checked by Devapāla. The defeat inflicted by the Rāshtrakūṭas and the pacific disposition of Vīgrahapāla and his successor Nārāyaṇapāla must have encouraged Bhoja to wrest the empire of Northern India from the Pālas.<sup>2</sup> His enterprise proved successful. He first turned his attention towards the west and destroyed the remnant of the political suzerainty enjoyed by the Pālas. He then proceeded to the east and subjugated extensive territories both in Bundelkhand and the United Provinces. It does not appear that he had encountered any opposition from the Pālas until he reached almost the borders of Magadha. But in spite of the weakness of the Pālas, Bhoja made extensive preparations against them.

We learn from the Kahla Plate<sup>3</sup> that Guṇāmbhodhideva, a Kalachuri king of Gorakhpur, who obtained some territories from Bhojadeva, snatched away the sovereignty of the Gaudas. This Bhojadeva is undoubtedly the great Pratihāra king, who was successful in his expedition against the Pāla king and probably rewarded the services of his feudatory Kalachuri chief by grant of lands. It is also probable that Bhoja obtained the assistance of the famous Kalachuri king Kokkalla I of Dāhala. Kokkalla's date is not definitely known, but he probably ruled between 840 and 890 A.D.<sup>4</sup> He is said to have granted freedom from fear to Bhoja and plundered the treasuries of various kingdoms including Vaṅga.<sup>5</sup> The two events may not be unconnected, and in any case Kokkalla's raid against Vaṅga, if it was really a fact, must have facilitated the success of Bhoja. Another chief that probably accompanied Bhoja

<sup>1</sup> *Orissa*, 193-95.

<sup>2</sup> References and authorities for the statements about the Gurjara-Pratihāras will be found in *GP.* 50 ff.

<sup>3</sup> v. 9. *El.* vii. 89.

<sup>4</sup> *DHNI.* ii. 784; *GP.* 52 f.n. 4; *IHQ.* xiii. 482 ff. A recent writer fixes the reign of Kokkalla I between 840 and 885 A.D. (*IHQ.* xvii. 117 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> *Bilhari Ins.* v. 17, *El.* i. 256, 264; *Benares cp.* v. 7, *El.* ii. 306; *Amoda Plates.* *El.* xix. 75 ff.; Bhoja has been identified by some scholars with Bhoja II, and by others with Bhoja I, but the former view appears to be untenable (*IHQ.* xiii. 482 ff.). Cf. also *GP.* 52 f.n. 4; *DHNI.* ii. 784; *TK.* 255-56; *IHQ.* xvii. 117 ff.

was the Guhiloṭ king Guhila II who is said to have defeated the Gauḍa king.<sup>1</sup> His father Harsharāja joined the campaigns of Bhoja in the early part of his reign. It is, therefore, exceedingly likely that he accompanied Bhoja in his successful Gauḍa expedition and took the credit thereof; for it is difficult to believe that he could have led an expedition against distant Gauḍa on his own account.

Bhoja had thus organised a formidable confederacy against the Pālas, and it seems he inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. Being secured against any trouble from the Rāshtrakūṭas in the south,<sup>2</sup> and having laid low the power of the Pālas, Bhoja could enjoy in peace the extensive empire he had established in Northern India. In the west he had conquered Karnal in the Punjab and the Kathiawar Peninsula, and probably extended his empire up to the borders of the Muslim principalities in the Indus Valley. In the east the Kalachuris of Gorakhpur as well as the Chandellas of Jeṣākabhukti (Bundelkhand) acknowledged his suzerainty, and the Pālas were humbled to the dust. Armed with the resources of this vast empire, Bhoja's son and successor Mahendrapāla followed up the victory over the Pālas with relentless severity. Six of his inscriptions,<sup>3</sup> found in Patna and Gayā districts, leave no doubt that Magadha was annexed to the Pratihāra empire. Recently, an inscription of Mahendrapāla (No. 55), dated in his fifth year, has been found on a pillar unearthed during the excavations at Pāhārpur in Rajshahi district, the site of the famous Somapura-vihāra of Dharmapāla. It proves that even Northern Bengal had passed on for a time into the hands of the Pratihāras.

It is difficult to give a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenal success of the Pratihāras and the complete collapse of the Pālas during the latter half of the ninth century A.D. The personality of Bhoja and his success in organising a powerful confederacy are no doubt important factors, but able rulers like Devapāla might have successfully contended against both. The failure of the Pāla kings undoubtedly demonstrates their personal incapacity and want of foresight and diplomacy. But there might have been other factors at work. We have already hinted at the probability of a disputed succession after the death of Devapāla. Further, the records of Assam and Orissa show that both these neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> Chatsu Ins. v. 23. *El.* XII. 15.

<sup>2</sup> The revolt of the Gurjara branch, the constant struggle with the Eastern Chālukyas, and above all the pacific disposition of Amoghavarsha may explain the absence of active hostility between him and Bhoja. Cf. *RA.* 77.

<sup>3</sup> Ins. Nos. 53, 54, 56-59.

kingdoms, which had been subjugated by Devapāla, had again become powerful. In Assam, king Harjara, one of whose known dates is 829-30 A.D.,<sup>1</sup> had assumed imperial titles,<sup>2</sup> and the record of his son Vanamāla describes him as a powerful emperor and conqueror in many battles.<sup>3</sup> In Orissa, the Śailodbhava dynasty re-established its supremacy on the ruins of the Karas, and Sainyabhīta III Mādhavavarman Śrīnivāsa (c. 850 A.D.) established the greatness of his family. He and his successor are said to have performed Aśvamedha, Vājapeya and other sacrifices, in token of their political supremacy.<sup>4</sup>

The rise to power of these two dependent principalities might have been either the cause or the effect of the weakness of the Pāla kings. In the absence of positive evidences we cannot hazard any conjecture in favour of the one or the other, but we must keep in view the possibility of the reaction of the greatness of these powers upon the fortunes of the Pālas.

It has been mentioned above that Vīgrahapāla I married a Haihaya princess. This might have been a move on the part of the Pālas to win over the friendship of the Kalachuris. We know that the Rāshtrakūṭas formed numerous matrimonial alliances<sup>5</sup> with the family of the powerful Kalachuri king Kokkalla who had at least eighteen sons (and possibly also numerous daughters). It is not unlikely that Vīgrahapāla's queen was a daughter of Kokkalla himself. But, as we know from the case of the Rāshtrakūṭas, such alliances did not always prevent political rivalries leading to active hostilities. In the case of the Pālas, we cannot say whether the Haihaya alliance was really of any help to them. But it is certain that they were able to recover the possession of Northern Bengal and Magadha before the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla was over.

Three inscriptions<sup>6</sup> of Nārāyaṇapāla, dated in the years 7, 9 and 17, and found in Bihar, seem to prove that the kingdom of Magadha was in his possession at least up to his 17th year i.e. c. 870 A.D. The dates of the seven inscriptions of Mahendrapāla found in Bengal and Bihar range between years 2 and 9 or 19, i.e. c. 887 to 894 or 904 A.D. The Pratihāra power must have been considerably weakened shortly after the last-named year. For some time between 915 and 917 A.D., if not earlier, the Pratihāra king Mahīpāla, son of Mahendrapāla, was disastrously defeated by the Rāshtrakūṭas. His capital was sacked and he fled towards the east, hotly pursued by his enemies.

<sup>1</sup> Tejpur Ins., Gupta Samvat 510. *JBORS.* III. 511.

<sup>2</sup> Hāiyungthal cp. *Kām-śā.* 50.

<sup>3</sup> Tejpur Pl. vv. 11-16. *Kām-śā.* 60-61.

<sup>4</sup> *JAHRS.* x. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *DHNI.* II. 760-61.

<sup>6</sup> *Ins.* Nos. 12-14.

This catastrophe indicates the weakness of the Pratihāras, which was perhaps due to internal troubles<sup>1</sup> following the death of Mahendrapāla and gave an opportunity to the Pālas to retrieve their position. In any case, as we find an inscription of Nārāyaṇapāla (No. 15) in Bihar dated in the year 54 of his reign, we may presume that the Pāla king recovered Northern Bengal and Bihar about 908 A.D., if not earlier.

Nārāyaṇapāla had also probably come into conflict with the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa II who succeeded Amoghavarsha about 880 A.D., and ruled till 914 A.D. It is said in the Rāshtrakūṭa records<sup>2</sup> that Kṛishṇa II was the 'preceptor charging the Gaudas with the vow of humility,' and that 'his command was obeyed by Āṅga, Kalinga, Gaṅga, and Magadha.' A petty chief of Velanāṇḍu (in Kistna district) named Malla I, who claims to have subdued the Vaṅgas,<sup>3</sup> Magadhas, and the Gaudas, probably accompanied Kṛishṇa II in his expedition. The nature and result of this expedition are difficult to determine, but perhaps Kṛishṇa II had some success against the Pāla king. It is very likely that the Rāshtrakūṭa Tuṅga, whose daughter Bhāgyadevī was married to Nārāyaṇapāla's son Rājyapāla, is no other than Jagattuṅga,<sup>4</sup> the son of Kṛishṇa II. In that case we may presume that the marriage alliance had brought about, at least temporarily, a cessation of hostilities.

Nārāyaṇapāla died about 908 A.D., and was succeeded by his son Rājyapāla who ruled for at least thirty-two years.<sup>5</sup> As noted above, Rājyapāla married Bhāgyadevī, the daughter of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Tuṅga. He is credited in official records with works of public utility such as excavation of big tanks and construction of lofty temples.<sup>6</sup> He was succeeded by his son Gopāla II, who ruled for at least seventeen years.<sup>7</sup> Several records of both these kings have been found in Magadha,<sup>8</sup> and a copper-plate grant, dated in

<sup>1</sup> TK. 254 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Deoli cp. v. 13. EI. v. 193.

<sup>3</sup> Pithapuram Ins. v. 11. EI. iv. 40. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ins. No. 31. v. 8. Tuṅga is usually identified with Jagattuṅga, son of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa II, who died about 914 A.D. (JASB. 1892, Part I, p. 80). Jagattuṅga predeceased his father and never ascended the throne. His son Indra III succeeded Kṛishṇa II. Tuṅga may be regarded as an abbreviated form of Jagattuṅga who was a contemporary of Nārāyaṇapāla, father of Rājyapāla. But the proposed identification, though very probable, cannot be regarded as certain. For we must remember that there were other Rāshtrakūṭa branches, e.g., the one ruling in Gujarat. R. D. Banerji is inclined (BI. 226) to identify Tuṅga with Tuṅgadharmāvaloka whose inscription was found at Bodh-Gayā (R. L. Mitra, *Buddha-Gayā*, p. 185, pl. XL). N. Vasu identified Tuṅga with Kṛishṇa II himself who had the epithet Śubhaṭṭuṅga (VJI. 128).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ins. No. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Ins. No. 31. v. 7.

<sup>7</sup> See *infra* p. 179.

<sup>8</sup> Ins. Nos. 17-22, 24.

the sixth year of Gopāla II (No. 23), proves his possession of Northern Bengal.

Thus after the end of the disastrous reign of Nārāyaṇapāla, the prospects of the Pālas appeared somewhat bright. The Pratihāras had suffered a severe blow from which they were not likely to recover for some time, and there was a truce with the Rāshtrakūṭas cemented by a marriage alliance. The worst crisis in the history of the Pālas seemed to have been over.

But unfortunately for the Pālas, the downfall of the Pratihāras let loose other forces which proved no less disastrous to them. Two great powers, the Chandellas and the Kalachuris, tried to establish their political supremacy in Northern India, and the Pālas had to bear the brunt of their aggressive imperialism.

Yaśovarman, who laid the foundations of the greatness of the Chandellas, is said to have carried on incessant military campaigns all over Northern India, and dominated the whole region from the Himālayas to Malwa and from Kashmir to Bengal. Even making due allowance for the exaggerations of the court-poets, he must be credited with military successes over a wide range of territories. In particular, his conquest of the famous fortress of Kālaṅjara gave him a dominant position in the heart of Northern India.<sup>1</sup> According to the Chandella records, Yaśovarman 'was a sword to (cut down) the Gaudas as if they were pleasure-creepers,' and his son Dhaṅga, who ascended the throne some time before 954 A.D. and ruled till about 1000 A.D., kept in prison the queens of Rāḍhā and Aṅga.<sup>2</sup> These statements may not be literally true, but we may take it for granted that during the reigns of Rājyapāla and his two successors, Gopāla II and Vīrahapāla II, Bengal fared badly in the hands of Yaśovarman and Dhaṅga. About the same time the Kalachuri rulers also raided various parts of the country. In the Kalachuri records we find reference to incursions against Bengal by two successive Kalachuri kings, Yuvarāja I and his son Lakshmanarāja, who probably ruled in the second and third quarters of the tenth century A.D. Yuvarāja is said to have had amorous dalliances with the women of Gauda, Karṇāṭa, Lāṭa, Kāśmīra and Kalinga.<sup>3</sup> This is a poetical way of describing military raids in these countries, but it is difficult to get any idea of their nature and effect. Lakshmanarāja is said to have been 'skilful in breaking (*i.e.* defeating) Vaṅgāla,'<sup>4</sup> which, as we have seen above, refers to Southern and

<sup>1</sup> *DHNI*. II. 674-75.

<sup>2</sup> Khajuraho Ins. No. II, verse 23; No. IV, verse 46 (*EI*. I. 120, 132, 145).

<sup>3</sup> Bilhari Ins. v. 24 (*EI*. I. 250, 265).

<sup>4</sup> Goharwa cp. v. 8 (*EI*. XI. 142).

part of Eastern Bengal.<sup>1</sup> As Lakshmanarāja is also known to have conquered Odra,<sup>2</sup> it is very probable that he advanced through Orissa to the deltaic coast of Bengal, as Rājendra Choḷa did a few years later.

These foreign raids may be regarded both as causes and effects of the military weakness and political disruption of the Pāla kingdom. The reference in Kalachuri and Chandella inscriptions to the various component parts of the kingdom such as Aṅga, Rādhā, Gauḍa, and Vaṅgāla as separate units may not be without significance. It is true that sometimes a kingdom is referred to by the name of a particular province within it, but evidences are not altogether wanting that in the present instance, the different states named above really formed independent or semi-independent principalities.

The Pāla records definitely state that the paternal kingdom of the Pālas had been possessed by an usurper<sup>3</sup> before the end of the reign of Vīrahapāla II, or in any case shortly after it. It is generally held that this usurper belonged to the line of Kāmboja chiefs who are known to have ruled about this time both in West and North Bengal. It was formerly believed that this was due to the successful invasion of Northern Bengal by the Kāmbojas,<sup>4</sup> a hill-tribe from the north, west or east.<sup>5</sup> But the recently discovered Irdā copper-plate grant (No. 49) puts an altogether different complexion on the whole matter.

This grant was issued from the capital city called Priyaṅgu, and records grants of land in Vardhamāna-*bhukti* (Burdwan Division) by the Paramēśvara, Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Mahārājādhirāja, the illustrious Nayapāladeva in the 13th year of his reign. He had succeeded his elder brother Nārāyaṇapāla, who was the son of Rājyapāla and Bhāgyadevī. Rājyapāla is given all the three imperial titles, and is described as the ornament of the Kāmboja family.

Now the queen of the Pāla king Rājyapāla, as we have seen above, was also named Bhāgyadevī, and it is, therefore, tempting to identify the king Rājyapāla of the Irdā Plate with the Pāla king of that name. But this assumption is not free from difficulties, and there is no general agreement among scholars on this point.<sup>6</sup> If we identify Rājyapāla of the Irdā Plate with the Pāla king Rājyapāla, we must hold that there was a partition of the Pāla

<sup>1</sup> See *supra* p. 19; *IIIQ.* xvi. 225 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bilhari Ins. v. 62 (*ET.* i. 260, 268).

<sup>3</sup> Ins. No. 31, v. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Dinajpur Pillar Ins. (No. 48) refers to a Gauḍa king of Kāmboja family. For theories of Kāmboja conquest, cf. *GR.* 37; *BL.* 231.

<sup>5</sup> See *infra* p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> See *infra* p. 190.

kingdom after his death between two branches of the Pāla family. If we do not accept this identification, the most reasonable view would be to hold that Rājyapāla, an ambitious and powerful Kāmboja chief, perhaps a dignitary or high official under the Pālas,<sup>1</sup> had taken advantage of the weakness of the Pāla kingdom to set up an independent principality which ultimately comprised Western and Northern Bengal. The theory of a Kāmboja invasion is not supported by any positive evidence, and appears to be highly improbable.

But whichever of these views we may accept, the main fact remains that the Pāla kingdom was split up during the second half of the tenth century A.D. The kingdom of Rāḍhā, mentioned in the inscription of Dhaṅga, therefore, probably refers to the kingdom of Nārāyaṇapāla and Nayapāla comprising Western and Northern Bengal with its capital at Priyaṅgu. The other kingdom, Aṅga, would naturally refer to the dominions under Gopāla II and Vīgrahapāla II, which probably comprised Aṅga and Magadha.

The Pālas also lost control over East and South Bengal, and we have definite evidence of the existence of several independent kingdoms in this region. The earliest is the kingdom of Harikela under a Buddhist king Mahārājādhirāja Kāntideva, known from an incomplete draft of a copper-plate grant found in an old temple at Chittagong.<sup>2</sup> This grant was issued from Vardhamānapura, presumably the capital of Kāntideva. According to I-tsing,<sup>3</sup> Harikela denoted the eastern limit of Eastern India, but some other Chinese authority applies the name to the coastland between Samatāṭa and Orissa.<sup>4</sup> If Vardhamānapura is to be identified with Burdwan, as no other city of that name in Bengal is known to us, the latter interpretation of Harikela, which is also supported by Indian sources,<sup>5</sup> would be preferable. Kāntideva's kingdom would thus comprise a

<sup>1</sup> The Pālas employed mercenary forces, and certainly recruited horses from Kāmboja (Ins. No. 6, v. 13). Mr. N. G. Majumdar has very rightly observed that "if horses could be brought into Bengal from the north-western frontier of India during the Pāla period, it is not unreasonable to suppose that for trade and other purposes some adventurers could also have found their way into that province" (*EI.* xxii. 153). Mercenary soldiers (specially cavalry) might have been recruited from the Kāmbojas, and some of them might have been influential chiefs. It has been suggested also that the Kāmbojas might have come to Bengal with the Pratihāras when they conquered part of this province (*DHNI.* I. 311; *IHQ.* xv. 511).

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Review*, 1922, p. 612. The original plate is now in the Dacca Museum.

<sup>3</sup> *I-tsing*, p. XLVI.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the map at the end of vol. II, of St. Julien's translation of Hiuen Tsaang which was originally published in Japan in 1710.

<sup>5</sup> Harikela is mentioned in Hemachandra's *Abhidhāna-chintāmaṇi* (v. 257) as a synonym of Vaṅga.

portion of South and West Bengal. The kingdom was presumably founded by him, as his father and grandfather are referred to as ordinary persons. He married Vindurati, the daughter of a great king, and this marriage probably helped him in carving out an independent principality. For the date of Kāntideva we are solely dependent on palaeographic evidence, and we may place his reign during the period 850-950 A.D.<sup>1</sup> It is very likely that Kāntideva flourished during the decadent period that set in after the death of Devapāla, and took advantage of the weakness of the central authority to found an independent kingdom in Eastern Bengal. Ultimately he extended his authority over Southern Bengal and probably even a part of Western Bengal. In other words, he might have been one of the earliest kings of Vaṅgāla, a kingdom which came into prominence since the tenth century A.D.

We know of another independent king, Layahachandradeva, who ruled near about Comilla for at least eighteen years<sup>2</sup> during the tenth century A.D.

Another dynasty, with names of kings also ending in *-chandra*, had set up an independent kingdom in Eastern Bengal during the second half of the tenth century A.D. Two rulers of this dynasty, Trailokyachandra and his son Śrichandra, are known to have ruled over Harikela, with Chandradvīpa (comprising roughly the modern district of Bakarganj)<sup>3</sup> as their central seat of authority. As another king, Govindachandra, is known to have ruled over Southern and Eastern Bengal at the beginning of the eleventh century A.D., it is probable that he, too, belonged to the same family, and that the Chandra kingdom even originally comprised both Southern and Eastern Bengal.

It would thus appear that during the reigns of Gopāla II and his son and successor Vīrahapāla II, there were three well-defined kingdoms, *viz.*, the Chandra kingdom comprising East and South Bengal, the Kāmboja-Pāla kingdom comprising North and West Bengal, and the Pāla kingdom proper, comprising Aṅga and Magadha. Gopāla II and his son Vīrahapāla II had the curious misfortune of losing the paternal territory of the dynasty, though ruling over other parts of the kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> The editors of the Chittagong Plate have fixed its date on palaeographic grounds between 750-850 A.D. But although the general character of the alphabets would favour such an assumption, certain letters (notably *kh*, *ś*, and *ṇ*) have decidedly later forms.

<sup>2</sup> The history of Layahachandra and the other Chandra kings mentioned below is discussed separately in Ch. IX. *infra* where full references are given.

<sup>3</sup> See *supra* pp. 17-18.



In verse 11 of the Bāngarh Grant of Mahīpāla (No. 31), the elephant-forces of Vīgrahapāla II are said to have wandered in the eastern regions full of water, the Malaya mountains in the south, the desert regions<sup>1</sup> in the west, and the Himālaya mountains in the north. This description of the aimless wanderings of Vīgrahapāla's forces in all directions was regarded by some scholars as a covert allusion to the loss of paternal kingdom by Vīgrahapāla, and his vain attempt to seek help or refuge in various quarters.<sup>2</sup> A recently discovered copper-plate applies the same verse to Gopāla II.<sup>3</sup> This undoubtedly weakens the force of the argument in favour of the above interpretation, but the verse may not unreasonably be regarded as a poetic method of indicating the great catastrophe which befell the Pāla kingdom during the reigns of Gopāla II, Vīgrahapāla II, and possibly Vīgrahapāla III, to whom also the same verse is applied.

#### IV. RESTORATION UNDER MAHĪPĀLA (c. 988-1038 A.D.)

When Mahīpāla I succeeded his father Vīgrahapāla II about 988 A.D., the prospect of his family was undoubtedly gloomy in the extreme. It reflects no small credit upon him that by heroic efforts he succeeded in restoring the fortunes of his family, at least to a considerable extent.

According to verse 12 of the Bāngarh Grant (No. 31), he recovered his paternal kingdom which was '*anadhikṛita-vilupta*.' This expression has been usually interpreted as 'snatched away (*vilupta*) by people who had no claim to it' (taking *anadhikṛita* in the sense of *anadhikāri*). Mr. N. G. Majumdar has pointed out that although this is possible, it is somewhat far-fetched, and the proper meaning of the expression is 'lost owing to non-occupation.'<sup>4</sup> But whatever interpretation we accept, it is clear that Mahīpāla recovered his paternal kingdom which was in possession of some other ruling family.

The expression 'paternal kingdom' has been taken by most writers to apply to Varendra,<sup>5</sup> which was in occupation of the

<sup>1</sup> The word read as '*taru*' in GL. 95 is really '*maru*' (desert). Cf. EI. xiv. 326.

<sup>2</sup> The view was first put forward by A. K. Maitreya (GL. 100. f.n.) and accepted by R. D. Banerji (BI. 239).

<sup>3</sup> v. 10 of Ins. No. 23. The same verse is applied to Vīgrahapāla III (v. 14 of Ins. No. 39), but it was regarded as an error on the part of the composer. As Gopāla II is an earlier king, the verse must have been current before the time of Vīgrahapāla II.

<sup>4</sup> EI. xxii. 152.

<sup>5</sup> For the expression '*janaka-bhūḥ*' is applied to Varendra in RC.

Kāmbhoja ruler. But, as has been shown above, practically the whole of Bengal proper had passed out of the hands of the Pālas, and there is hardly any justification for regarding Varendra alone as the paternal kingdom of the Pālas. It would, therefore, perhaps, be better to take the paternal kingdom as generally meaning 'Bengal,' and consider how far Mahipāla was successful in recovering it.

The first important evidence in this respect is furnished by a short inscription (No. 30) on an image of Vishṇu, found in a village called Bāghāura near Brahmanbaria in the Tippera district. It records the setting up of the image 'in Samatata, in the kingdom of Mahipāla, in the year 3.' Although it is not absolutely certain whether king Mahipāla of the inscription refers to the first or second king of that name, the probability is in favour of the former. In that case, we must presume that Mahipāla must have recovered Eastern Bengal, or at least a part of it, before the end of the third year of his reign.<sup>1</sup>

Now, it is not possible for a king with his base in Aṅga and Magadha to proceed to Eastern Bengal without conquering either Varendra or Rāḍhā *i.e.*, Northern or Western Bengal. Mahipāla evidently chose the former route. For his Bāngarh Grant (No. 31) shows that he was in occupation of Varendra (North Bengal) in the year 9 of his reign. We may thus hold that Mahipāla had recovered Northern and Eastern Bengal within three years of his accession.

There is no positive evidence that he had recovered either Western or Southern Bengal. But some light is thrown on this question by the account of Rājendra Chōla's invasion of Bengal which requires a somewhat detailed discussion.

The northern expedition of the great Chōla emperor was led by one of his generals and lasted about two years from 1021 to 1023 A.D.<sup>2</sup> Its object was to bring, by force of arms, the sacred waters of the Ganges, in order to sanctify his own land. After

<sup>1</sup> The attribution of the Bāghāura Image Ins. to Mahipāla I is not accepted by all. Dr. D. C. Ganguly takes the king to be the Pratīhāra king Mahipāla, son of Mahendrapāla (*IHQ.* xvi. 179 ff). Dr. H. C. Ray opposes this view (*Ibid.* 631 ff.), and holds it as probable that Mahipāla of the Bāghāura Image Ins. refers to the first Pāla king of the name. It may be admitted that the available evidence is not sufficient to lead to a definite conclusion, and it is not beyond the range of possibility that Mahipāla of the Bāghāura Image Ins. may be either the Pratīhāra king Mahipāla, or a local ruler of Samatata. The view propounded in the text is, however, held by most of the scholars, and appears to be *more probable* than any other hypothesis.

<sup>2</sup> For the account of the Chōla expedition, cf. K. A. Nilakanta Śāstri, *The Chōlas*, 247 ff.

conquering Oḍḍa-vishaya (Orissa) and Kosalai-nāḍu, the Chōla general seized

"Taṇḍabutti, . . . (land which he acquired) after having destroyed Dharma-pāla (in) a hot battle; Takkaṇalāḍam whose fame reached (all) directions, (and which he occupied) after having forcibly attacked Raṇasūra; Vaṅgāla-deśa, where the rain water never stopped, (and from which) Govindachandra fled, having descended (from his) male elephant; elephants of rare strength, women and treasure, (which he seized) after having been pleased to frighten the strong Mahīpāla on the field of hot battle with the (noise of the) conches (got) from the deep sea; Uttiralāḍam (on the shore of) the expansive ocean (producing) pearls; and the Gaṅgā whose waters bearing fragrant flowers dashed against the bathing places."

Now there can be no doubt that Taṇḍabutti, Takkaṇalāḍam, Uttiralāḍam and Vaṅgāla-deśa in the above passage denote respectively Daṇḍabhukti, Dakṣhiṇa-Rāḍhā, Uttara-Rāḍhā and Vaṅgāla.<sup>2</sup>

It has been reasonably inferred from the Tamil version quoted above, that the Chōla general "attacked and overthrew, in order, Dharmapāla of Daṇḍabhukti, Raṇasūra of Southern Rāḍhā, and Govindachandra of Vaṅgāla, before he fought with Mahīpāla and conquered Uttara-Rāḍhā." It is not definitely stated that Mahīpāla was the ruler of Uttara-Rāḍhā, though that seems to be the implication, as no separate ruler of this kingdom is mentioned, and the defeat of Mahīpāla preceded its conquest. According to the Sanskrit version, however, Southern Rāḍhā was conquered before Daṇḍabhukti,<sup>3</sup> a view which is difficult to accept on account of the geographical position of the two.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This is the translation of Prof. Śāstri (*Coḷas*, 249, as amended in *IHQ*, xiii, 151-52) which differs to some extent from that of Hultzsch (*EI*, ix, 233) in respect of the passage concerning Mahīpāla. It may be noted that Hultzsch's translation "Uttiralāḍam, as rich in pearls as the ocean," or an alternative translation "close to the sea yielding pearls" (*JRAS*, 1937, p. 89), is more acceptable than that of Śāstri, for the region is not on the sea-coast, as the latter would imply. As regards Mahīpāla, there is some controversy as to whether it refers to the Pāla king Mahīpāla I, or is only a common noun meaning 'king' and has reference to a ruler of the Orissa (Oḍḍa) country (*JRAS*, 1935, pp. 661-66; 1937, pp. 79-90). But most scholars accept the view of Kielhorn that Mahīpāla, referred to in the Chōla inscription, is the first Pāla ruler of that name (*IHQ*, xiii, 149). Prof. S. K. Aiyangar holds that Mahīpāla refers to king of Orissa, even if it is taken as a personal name (*JRAS*, 1937, pp. 79-90).

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Aiyangar's view that Vaṅgāla was a general name of Bengal and not a part of it (*JRAS*, 1937, p. 82) is unacceptable in view of the specific mention of Uttara-Rāḍhā and Dakṣhiṇa-Rāḍhā, and specially as we know that the name Vaṅgāla was used about this time to denote a part of Bengal. It is not, however, identical with Vaṅga division of Bengal, as Prof. Aiyangar assumes (*Ibid*).

<sup>4</sup> *Coḷas*, 248, 251.

<sup>5</sup> But cf. *JRAS*, 1937, p. 84.

The Chola campaign, as Professor K. A. Nilakanta Śāstrī has rightly observed, "could hardly have been more than a hurried raid across a vast stretch of country."<sup>1</sup> We also agree with him that the statement in the Tiruvālangādu Plates that the water of the Ganges was carried to Rājendra by the defeated kings of Bengal at the bidding of the Chola general is a boast without foundation. The Chola conquest, no doubt, inflicted losses and miseries upon the people, but does not seem to have affected in any way the political condition of the country.

The detailed account, however, seems to show that Daṇḍabhukti, Southern Rāḍhā, and Vaṅgāla were independent kingdoms at the time of the Chola invasion. Professor Śāstrī says that

"the language of the Tamil inscription appears to suggest, what seems likely even otherwise, that Mahipāla had a sort of supremacy over the other chiefs named in this context, and that the overthrow of Dharmapāla, Raṇasūra, and Govindachandra led to the final struggle in which Mahipāla was captured together with another person called Saṅgu, perhaps his Commander."

It is difficult to accept the Professor's statement that Mahipāla was captured in the final struggle, as it is explicitly stated that Mahipāla was 'put to flight'<sup>2</sup> or 'frightened.' It is equally difficult to find any support in the Tamil passage, quoted above, for the overlordship of Mahipāla over the other kingdoms mentioned in it, except perhaps in the case of Uttara-Rāḍhā. As we have seen above, Daṇḍabhukti was included within the kingdom of the Mahārājādhirāja Nayapāla which also probably included Rāḍhā and Varendra, and Southern and Eastern Bengal were ruled over by the Chandra kings, when Mahipāla ascended the throne. It would, therefore, be more reasonable to conclude that Govindachandra ruled over the old Chandra kingdom or at least a considerable part of it, and Dharmapāla, perhaps a scion of the Kāmboja family, still held Daṇḍabhukti; while a new dynasty, the Śūras, about whom we shall hear more hereafter (see *infra* p. 210) had established its authority in South Rāḍhā. Mahipāla was thus able to recover, in addition to North and a part of East Bengal, only the northern part of Rāḍhā *i.e.*, approximately that portion of the present Burdwan Division which lies to the north of the Ajay river.

<sup>1</sup> *Colas*, 247. This is also the view of Prof. Aiyangar (*JRAS.* 1937, p. 85).

<sup>2</sup> *Colas*, 251-52. The reference to Saṅgu would, of course, be omitted now in view of the amended translation proposed by Śāstrī (*IHQ.* xiii. 151-52) and quoted above.

<sup>3</sup> This is the translation of Hultzsch (*El.* ix. 233) and that given by Śāstrī in *Colas* (p. 252). But Śāstrī has now substituted it by 'frighten' (*IHQ.* xiii. 151-52). But even this does not support Śāstrī's contention that Mahipāla was captured.

The findspots of Mahīpāla's inscriptions<sup>1</sup> show that he was in possession of North and South Bihar. As the inscriptions of Nārāyaṇapāla, Rājyapāla, Gopāla II, and probably also of Vīgrahapāla II, have been found in South Bihar,<sup>2</sup> it may be regarded as having been in the continuous possession of the Pālas since its recovery after the conquest of Mahendrapāla, but we are not sure whether North Bihar was inherited or conquered by Mahīpāla.

According to an inscription found in Sārnāth near Benares (No. 29), and dated *Samvat* 1083, construction and repairs of many sacred structures on that site were undertaken by the order of Mahīpāla, king of Gauḍa.<sup>3</sup> the actual work having been entrusted to his two brothers Sthirapāla and Vasantapāla. Normally, we would be justified in inferring from such a record that Mahīpāla's suzerainty extended up to Benares in the year 1026 A.D. Such an inference is, however, liable to two objections: In the first place, Benares and Sārnāth being sacred places of almost international reputation, construction of buildings there by Mahīpāla does not necessarily imply any political suzerainty over the region. Secondly, as the work of construction is referred to as a past event, Mahīpāla probably died before the record was set up; at least, it is not necessary to conclude that Mahīpāla was alive in 1026 A.D.<sup>4</sup>

These are, no doubt, forceful arguments, but cannot be regarded as conclusive. As regards the first, the suzerainty over Benares may not be a necessary implication, but in view of the fact that Mahīpāla's dominions certainly included the whole of Bihar, it is, in any case, a reasonable inference, so long at least as it is not proved that Benares was under the rule of a different king. As regards the second also, the event might have been a past one, but as no other king of Gauḍa but Mahīpāla is referred to in the inscription, the date may be taken as one falling within his rule. For the present, therefore, we may regard Mahīpāla as ruling over Tirhut and probably also up to Benares, about 1026 A.D.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ins. Nos. 32-34, found in South Bihar, and No. 35, found in North Bihar.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ins. Nos. 15, 17-22, 24-28.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the monuments referred to in the Ins. cf. *JASB.* N.S. xv. 191.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *P.B.* 76; *B.I.* 257.

<sup>5</sup> One historical evidence is usually cited against the conclusion that Mahīpāla's authority extended up to Benares in the year 1026 A.D. The colophon of a Nepal ms. of the *Rāmāyaṇa* refers to the Mahārājādhirāja Pūṣyāvaloka Somavamsīodbhava Gauḍadhvaṣa Śrīmad-Gāṅgeyadeva as ruling in Tirabhukti (Northern Bihar) in *Samvat* 1076. Some scholars identify this Gāṅgeyadeva with the famous Kalachuri king of this name, and hold that his conquests extended up to North Bihar in 1019 A.D. (v.s. 1076). As the Kalachuri records also claim that

Towards the close of his reign, Mahipāla came into conflict with the powerful Kalachuri ruler Gāṅgeyadeva.<sup>1</sup> The Kalachuri records claim that the latter defeated the ruler of Aṅga,<sup>2</sup> which can only denote Mahipāla. It also appears from the statement of Baihaqui that Benares was in possession of the Kalachuri king in 1034 A.D. when Ahmad Niyal Tigin invaded it.<sup>3</sup> It may be reasonably concluded, therefore, that shortly after A.D. 1026, Mahipāla came into conflict with the Kalachuri king Gāṅgeyadeva and suffered reverses in his hands.

Mahipāla has been criticised by some writers for not having joined the Hindu confederacy organised by the Shāhi kings of the Punjab against Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Some have attributed his inactivity to asceticism, and others to intolerance of Hinduism and jealousy to other Hindu kings.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to subscribe to these views. When Mahipāla ascended the throne, the Pāla power had sunk to the lowest depths, and the Pāla kings had no footing in their own homeland. It must have taxed the whole energy and strength of Mahipāla to recover the paternal territories and to ward off the formidable invasions of Rājendra Chola and Gāṅgeyadeva. It reflects the greatest credit upon his ability and military genius that he succeeded in re-establishing his authority over a great part of Bengal, and probably also extended his conquests up to Benares. Even this success was due, in a large measure, to the

Gāṅgeyadeva defeated the ruler of Aṅga, the two events are naturally connected, and it is generally concluded that Gāṅgeyadeva defeated Mahipāla and conquered North Bihar some time before 1019 A.D. As such it is also difficult to believe that Mahipāla's conquest extended up to Benares in 1026 A.D. It is not generally recognised that the above view also goes counter to the evidence of the Imadpur (Muzaffarpur district) bronze figure inscriptions of Mahipāla I (No. 35) dated in the year 48. For the 48th regnal year of Mahipāla could hardly be placed before 1019 A.D. when North Bihar is supposed to have been under Gāṅgeyadeva.

As a matter of fact, the identification of the Gāṅgeyadeva of the Nepal manuscript with the Kalachuri king of that name is open to serious objections, and we cannot build any hypothesis on this basis without further corroborative evidence. This point has been thoroughly discussed by me in *IHQ.* vii. 681, where I have attempted to show that the date 1076 is to be referred to Śaka era (1154 A.D.) when Gaṅgadeva, the successor of Nānyadeva, ruled in North Bihar.

<sup>1</sup> The Gurgi Ins. of Prabodhasīva seems to refer to a conflict between the Gaṇḍa king and Kokkalladeva II, the father of Gāṅgeya. But no definite sense can be made out on account of the damaged state of the inscription (*El.* xxii. 123, f.n. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Goharwa cp. *El.* xi. 143, v. 17.

<sup>3</sup> The identification of Gang with Gāṅgeyadeva is very probable, though not certain. *Cf. E. & D.* ii. 123; Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 161; *DBHI.* ii. 773.

<sup>4</sup> *GR.* 41-43; *BI.* 256.

political circumstances in Northern India, viz., the disastrous and repeated invasions of Sultan Mahmud, which exhausted the strength and resources of the great powers, and diverted their attention to the west. It would have been highly impolitic, if not sheer madness, on the part of Mahipāla to fritter away his energy and strength in a distant expedition to the west, when his own kingdom was exposed to the threat of disruption from within and invasion from abroad.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, the achievements of Mahipāla must be regarded as highly remarkable, and he ranks as the greatest Pāla emperor after Devapāla. He not only saved the Pāla kingdom from impending ruin, but probably also revived to some extent the old imperial dreams. His success in the limited field that he selected for his activities is a sure measure of his prowess and statesmanship, and it is neither just nor rational to regret that he had not done more.

The revival of the Pāla power was also reflected in the restoration of the religious buildings in Benares (including Sārnāth) and Nālandā which had evidently suffered much during the recent collapse of the Pāla power. Reference has already been made to the Sārnāth inscription, which mentions 'hundreds of pious works' and the repairs of the famous Buddhist monuments of old undertaken by the orders of Mahipāla. Two inscriptions (Nos. 32, 33), dated in the 11th year of Mahipāla, refer to the restoration and repairs of the monuments of Nālandā after they were destroyed or damaged by fire, and the construction of two temples at Bodh-Gayā. Traditions have associated the name of Mahipāla with a number of big tanks and towns in North and West Bengal.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps not without significance, that of all the Pāla emperors, the name of Mahipāla alone figures in popular ballads still current in Bengal. Bengal has forgotten the names of its great emperors Dharmapāla.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. H. C. Ray generally supports this view (*DHNI*. i. 324; *IHQ*. xv. 507), though his statement that the Pālas were "rulers of a comparatively small principality" does not apply to Mahipāla. But this does not justify the criticism of Dr. D. C. Ganguly (*IHQ*. xvi. 179). It was not so much the size of the kingdom of Mahipāla, but its internal condition and external dangers, that account for the inactivity of Mahipāla. Even according to Dr. Ganguly, Mahipāla was ruler of North and South Bihar, and North Bengal. A ruler over these territories could easily rank among the other powerful potentates of Northern India about that time, and should have joined the common cause, if his kingdom possessed stability and security which Mahipāla's kingdom lacked.

<sup>2</sup> The big tank called Mahipāl-dighi (Dinajpur) and the towns of Mahipur (Bogra), Mahisantosh (Dinajpur), and Mahipāl (Murshidabad), and probably also Sāgardighi (Murshidabad) are associated with the name of Mahipāl, cf. *GR*. 41-42.

and Devapāla, but cherished the memory of the king who saved it at a critical juncture.

Before we conclude, reference may be made to two other historical events, the association of Mahīpāla with which is probable, but not certain.

According to the Jaina author Hemachandra, the Chaulukya king Durlabha, who ascended the throne of Anahilapāṭaka about 1009-10 A.D., won over his queen Durlabhadevī in a *svayamvara* ceremony, but, to retain possession of this princess, he had to fight a number of other claimants, amongst whom were the kings of Aṅga, Kāśi, Avanti, Chedi-deśa, Kuru-deśa, Hūṇa-deśa, Mathurā, and Vindhya.<sup>1</sup> Now the king of Aṅga, at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, was Mahīpāla I. If, therefore, the Jaina author is to be believed, we have a glimpse of a forgotten episode in the life of Mahīpāla when he was an unsuccessful suitor for the hands of Durlabhadevī. But such stories cannot be taken as historical without independent corroboration.

A manuscript of a drama named *Chaṇḍa-kaśika*, by Ārya Kṣemīśvara, was discovered by MM. Haraprasād Śāstrī in 1893.<sup>2</sup> It contains a verse in which king Mahīpāla is said to be an incarnation of Chandragupta, and the Karmāṭas, of the Nandas, and the play was staged before the king by his order. It is obvious that the poet implied that king Mahīpāla defeated the Karmāṭas, as Maurya Chandragupta defeated the Nandas. This Mahīpāla has been identified by some scholars with the Pāla king Mahīpāla I, and it has been suggested that the Cholas were referred to as the Karmāṭas. Mr. R. D. Banerji even went so far as to suggest, on the strength of this evidence, "that though Mahīpāla I was defeated by Rājendra Chola when he crossed into Rāḍhā from East Bengal, he prevented him from crossing the Ganges into Varendra or Northern Bengal, and so the Chola conqueror had to turn back from the banks of the Ganges."<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately the identification of the king Mahīpāla of *Chaṇḍa-kaśika* with the Pāla ruler Mahīpāla I is not accepted by others, who rather regard the Pratihāra ruler Mahīpāla as the hero of the drama.<sup>4</sup> In the absence of further particulars, it is difficult to decide the question one way or the other. The probability is, however, undoubtedly in favour of the latter view. For while there is no valid reason to regard Rājendra Chola as a Karmāṭa,

<sup>1</sup> *DHNI*. II. 945-46

<sup>2</sup> *JASB*. LXII. 250.

<sup>3</sup> *PB*. 73; *BI*. 251-52.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. K. A. N. Śāstrī in *JOR*. VI. 191-98; *IC*. II. 797. Mr. J. C. Ghosh upholds the view of Mr. Banerji (*IC*. II. 354.).



the Pratihāra king Mahīpāla undoubtedly had a life and death struggle with the Karṇātas under Indra III. It is true that Mahīpāla was defeated, but the retreat of the Karṇāta forces and the re-occupation of Kanauj by Mahīpāla could easily be magnified by the court-poet as a glorious victory of Mahīpāla over the Karṇātas, and such an assumption was well calculated to soothe the wounded vanity of the Pratihāras. In any case, it is not safe to derive any inference from *Chanda-kauśika* regarding the victory of the Pāla ruler over the Chola army.

#### V. THE BREAK-UP OF THE PĀLA KINGDOM

Mahīpāla was succeeded by his son Nayapāla, who ruled for at least fifteen years (c. 1038-1055 A.D.).<sup>1</sup> The most important event in his reign was his long-drawn struggle with the Kalachuri king Karṇa or Lakshmikarṇa. It is evident that the aggressive policy of Gāṅgeyadeva was continued by his son and successor. The Kalachuri records refer, in vague poetic language, to Karṇa's raids against, or encounter with, the chiefs of Vaṅga and Gauḍa.<sup>2</sup> A more detailed account is furnished by the Tibetan texts.<sup>3</sup> They refer to a war between Nayapāla and the Tirthika king Kārṇya (or king of Kārṇya) of the west who had invaded Magadha. There can be hardly any doubt that the latter name stands for Karṇa. As regards the details of the struggle, it seems that at first Karṇa defeated Nayapāla. It is said that failing to capture the city, Karṇa's troops sacked some of the sacred Buddhist institutions, and even carried away a good deal of church furniture. The famous Buddhist monk Dipaṁkara Śrījñāna (also known as Atīśa) was at that time residing in Magadha, but showed no interest in the struggle that was going on. But, we are told, that 'afterwards when victory turned towards (Nayapāla) and the troops of Karṇa were being slaughtered by the armies of Magadha, he took Karṇa and his men under his protection and sent them away.' Dipaṁkara then made serious efforts to bring the struggle to an end.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ins. Nos. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Bheraghat Ins. v. 12 (*El.* II. 11, 15); Karanbel Ins. (*IA.* XVIII. 215, 217). According to v. 23 of the Rewa Stone Ins. (*El.* XXIV. 112), Karṇa achieved a decisive victory over the king of the Eastern country who probably lost his life in the fierce fight. This point has been discussed in Ch. VII *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> For the Tibetan tradition cf. *JBTS.* I (1893), pp. 9-10; S. C. Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*, 61; This account, with slight difference in details, is also given in *JASB.* 1891, p. 61. Mr. Das writes 'king of Kārṇya (probably Kānauj).'

"Unmindful of his health even at the risk of his life, Atīśa again and again crossed the rivers that lay between the two kingdoms." His efforts proved successful, and a treaty was concluded between the two hostile kings on the basis of the mutual restitution of all conquests and plunder.

It is difficult to say how far the Tibetan tradition is correct. In particular, the part played by Dipamkara seems to have been exaggerated. But, in view of other evidences, the main outline of the story, viz., an indecisive struggle between Karna and Nayapāla, followed by a treaty, may well be taken as historical.

According to Tibetan tradition, Dipamkara left India for good at the age of 59, and spent the last thirteen years of his life in Tibet, dying at the age of 73. The date of his departure has been fixed by various authorities at 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041 and 1042 A.D.<sup>1</sup> As we know, the Kalachuri king Karna succeeded his father in 1041 A.D.<sup>2</sup> So even taking the latest date proposed for the departure of Atīśa, it is difficult to reconcile the discrepancy. Perhaps it would be wise not to rely too much on the accuracy of dates derived from Tibetan sources. On the other hand, it is equally likely that the war, referred to in the Tibetan texts, is only a phase of the long-drawn struggle between the Pālas and the Kalachuris which had been going on since the time of Gāṅgeyadeva.

According to the views propounded above, Mahīpāla was in possession of Benares till at least 1026 A.D., but it passed into the hands of the Kalachuri king Gāṅgeya in A.D. 1034. We must, therefore, presume that hostility had broken out before that date, and that it was continued after the death of Gāṅgeya by his son Karna. The initial success of the Kalachuris is testified to by the Tibetan tradition, the claim in Kalachuri records that Gāṅgeyadeva defeated the ruler of Aṅga, and the occupation of Benares by the latter. The discomfiture of the Kalachuris towards the end, and their treaty with the Pālas, may have been due, to a great extent, to the death of the great king Gāṅgeyadeva. This theory fits in well with the date of the departure of Dipamkara as given in the Tibetan texts, if we take the latest date proposed viz., 1042 A.D.

In any case, the treaty was merely an interlude, and Karna once more directed his arms against the Pālas during the reign of

<sup>1</sup> 1038—JASB. 1891, p. 51.

1039—S. C. Das, *Indian Pandits*, 50, 76.

1040—Lévi-Nepal, II. 189. *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, Index, p. liv.

1041—IHQ. VI. 169.

1042—JASB. 1881, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> This is the generally accepted view, though Mr. J. C. Ghosh places it in 1039 A.D. (*IC*. I. 239).

Vigrahapāla III (c. 1055-1070 A.D.), the son and successor of Naya-pāla. During the interval he had secured a position of supremacy by destroying the Paramāras and the Chandellas, and conquering the upper valley of the Mahānadi.<sup>1</sup>

The references in Kalachuri records to Karṇa's encounter with the lords of Gauḍa and Vaṅga presumably refer to this second expedition, as the area of the struggle in the first case did not extend beyond Magadha.<sup>2</sup> According to the Kalachuri records, Vaṅga trembled in fear of Karṇa, and the lord of Gauḍa waited upon him.<sup>3</sup> That Karṇa advanced at least up to the border of Western Bengal is proved by his record on a pillar at Pāikor in the district of Birbhum.<sup>4</sup> But according to *Rāmacharita*,<sup>5</sup> Vigrahapāla III defeated Karṇa and married his daughter Yauvanaśrī. Evidently, in this second expedition, too, Karṇa, in spite of initial success, ultimately suffered defeat. Perhaps a peace was concluded, and the alliance was cemented by the marriage of Karṇa's daughter with Vigrahapāla III.

There is hardly any doubt that the king of Gauḍa mentioned in the Kalachuri record refers to the Pāla king. It is not, however, equally certain that the king of Vaṅga also refers to him. We have seen above (*supra* p. 139) that Mahīpāla recovered the possession of East Bengal from the Chandras, but that the latter continued to rule in South Bengal. It is also very likely that East Bengal, or at least a part of it, did not long remain under the Pālas but passed again into the hands of the Chandra kings.<sup>6</sup> These Chandra kings, or the Varmans that succeeded them, might have been ruling in Vaṅga at the time of Karṇa's expedition, though we are not quite sure of it.

There is no doubt also that the Pāla rulers Nayapāla and Vigrahapāla III were gradually losing their hold over Western Bengal. A chief calling himself Mahāmāṇḍalika Śvaraghosha issued a land-grant, in which he assumed the style of an independent king. The Grant is not dated, but may be referred to the eleventh century A.D., about the time of Vigrahapāla III. He issued the Grant from Dhekkarī, probably situated in Burdwan district.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *DIINI*, II, 779.

<sup>2</sup> The Tibetan tradition definitely asserts that Karṇa invaded only Magadha.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 144, f.n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *ASI*, 1921-22, p. 115; *Birbhum-vivaraṇa* (Bengali) by H. K. Mukhopādhyāya, II, 9.

<sup>5</sup> I, 9, commentary.

<sup>6</sup> For detailed discussion, see Ch. VII, *infra*.

<sup>7</sup> Rāmganj CP. of Śvaraghosha, *IB*, 149. Mr. N. G. Majumdar refers it on palaeographical grounds to the eleventh century A.D. It is difficult to accept Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar's view that the year 35 of the Ins. is to be referred to

About the same time we find the rise of the kingdom of *Paṭṭikerā* in the Tippera district. The existence of *Paṭṭikerā* as an independent kingdom throughout the second half of the eleventh and the twelfth century A.D. may be inferred from the Burmese chronicles, though unfortunately they do not give any historical account of it.<sup>1</sup>

It thus seems that Eastern Bengal had slipped from the hands of the Pālas and remained a separate independent kingdom, first under the Chandras, and then under the Varmans. There were also other petty independent kingdoms in Bengal.

The Pāla kings, constantly engaged in hostilities with the Kalachuris, could hardly recover their ancient territories in Bengal. The Kalachuri power was crushed towards the close of the third quarter of the eleventh century A.D. by the successive defeats that were inflicted upon Karna by his neighbours.<sup>2</sup> But before the Pālas could take advantage of this, they had to face an invasion from the Chālukyas of Karnaṭa. According to Bilhana,<sup>3</sup> the court-poet of the Chālukyas, the prince Vikramāditya (vi) went out on a career of conquest during the life-time of his father Someśvara I and defeated the kings of Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa, among others. As Someśvara I died before the return of his victorious son, the expedition probably took place not long before 1068 A.D. The Chālukya records refer in a general way to other military expeditions against Bengal during his reign and that of his two predecessors,<sup>4</sup> whose exact nature and amount of success are difficult to determine. But some very important political events coincide chronologically with these Chālukya raids, and are not impossibly direct or indirect consequences of the same. The most notable among these is the establishment of a Karnaṭa Kshatriya family, the Senas, as the ruling power in Rāḍhā or Western Bengal, and of the Varmans of Sindhapura, in Vaṅga or Eastern Bengal.

Another foreign invasion of Bengal which may be referred approximately to the middle of the eleventh century A.D., was that

the Chālukya-Vikrama Era (*List of Ins.*, 294). Dhekkari, the place from which it was issued, has been located in the Burdwan district by MM. H. P. Śāstri and A. K. Maitra, and in Goālpārā and Kāmarūpa districts of Assam by N. Vasu and N. G. Majumdar. In view of the fact that Dhekkari was the seat of one of the feudal lords who helped Rāmapāla, the former view is preferable.

<sup>1</sup> For further discussion cf. Ch. IX. *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> DHNI. II. 780

<sup>3</sup> *Vikramāṅkadeva-charita*, III. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ep. Carn. Devanagere Taluq Ins.* Nos. 2 and 3, and *Sudi Ins.*, *El.* xv. 86, 97-99, 104. The earliest raid must have taken place before 1053 A.D., for in the Kelawadi Ins. of that year Bhogadevarasa, the general of Someśvara I, claims to have conquered Vaṅga (*El.* iv. 262). Acha, a feudatory chief of Vikramāditya, led an expedition to Vaṅga which will be discussed later (see *infra* Ch. VIII).

of the Somavamśī ruler of Orissa, named Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. In one of his grants,<sup>1</sup> he states, after enumerating his various conquests, that 'he was cooled by the wind (caused by) profound shaking of the sky of Gauḍa and Rāḍha, and was the full moon in the clear sky of Vaṅga.'<sup>2</sup> These are beautifully vague phrases, and do not enable us to form any definite conclusion, but it seems to refer to some military expeditions against North, West, and East Bengal. The date of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti cannot be determined with any degree of certainty, but he may be placed about the middle of the eleventh century A.D.<sup>3</sup> The king of Orissa was evidently encouraged by the successful expedition of Rājendra Chōla and disruption of the Pāla empire. There was not perhaps a long interval between his triumphant raid and the Karmāṭa invasion, and while one facilitated the other, the effect of the two was ruinous to Bengal. Reference may also be made in this connection to another Orissan king, Udyotakeśarī, who claims to have defeated the forces of Gauḍa. The date of Udyotakeśarī is not known, but he probably flourished in the eleventh century A.D.<sup>4</sup>

The series of foreign invasions from the west and the south must have shaken the Pāla kingdom to its very foundations during the reigns of Nayapāla and his son and successor Vighrahapāla III. They had not only lost Eastern, Western, and Southern Bengal, but their power in Magadha was also being gradually reduced to a mere shadow. A clear evidence of this is furnished by four inscriptions found at Gayā. Two of these (Nos. 36, 37), dated in the year 15 of Nayapāla, refer to one Paritosha, his son Śūdraka, and the latter's son, called Viśvāditya in one and Viśvarūpa in the other. Nothing is said in the former to indicate the political importance of the family, but the latter says that Gayā was protected (*paripālita*) for a long time by the strength (*bāhvorbalena*) of Śūdraka. A third inscription (No. 38), dated in the fifth regnal year of Vighrahapāla III, bestows vague grandiloquent praises upon Śūdraka, and says, about Viśvarūpa, that he destroyed all his enemies. The fourth inscription (No. 52) of the family<sup>5</sup> is

<sup>1</sup> Sonpur Grant. *JBORS.* II. 45-50.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. R. D. Banerji attributes the conquest to Mahābhavagupta I (*Orissa*, 212).

<sup>3</sup> *DHNI.* I. 405.

<sup>4</sup> Bhuvaneśvara Ins. *JASB.* VII. 537 ff. Mr. R. D. Banerji refers Udyotakeśarī to the 10th century A.D. (*EI.* XIII. 165), while Mr. B. C. Majumdar places him in the 12th century (*EI.* XII. 239).

<sup>5</sup> There is a fifth inscription of the family (No. 51) which has not yet been fully deciphered. The published portion contains the name of Paritosha, but no historical information.

issued by king Yakshapāla,<sup>1</sup> son of Viśvarūpa. The genealogy begins with Śūdraka, who is said to have defeated his enemies and driven them to the forest. Then follows a very significant, but somewhat obscure, expression about him, viz., “*Śrī-Śūdrakaḥ svayam-apūjayad-indra-kalpo Gauḍeśvaro nṛpati-lakṣaṇa-pūjayā-yam.*” Dr. H. C. Ray has taken this expression to mean that the ‘Lord of Gauḍa paid homage to Śūdraka.’<sup>2</sup> I think the expression rather means that the lord of Gauḍa formally honoured Śūdraka by investing him as king with proper ceremony. In any case, it shows that at the time the record was composed, the pretensions of the family rose higher than before. This is further proved by the fact that Śūdraka’s son Viśvarūpa is now called *nṛpa* or king, and at the very end, where in other inscriptions reference was made to the ruling Pāla king, a wish is expressed that the famous works of Yakshapāla may endure for a long time. A study of these four inscriptions shows the gradual decline of the Pāla power in the Gayā district during the reigns of Nayapāla and Vighrapāla III.<sup>3</sup>

Thus towards the middle of the eleventh century A.D. the fabric of the Pāla sovereignty was crumbling to dust. Eastern Bengal, West Bengal and Southern Bengal had definitely passed from their hands, and their suzerainty over Magadha was reduced to a mere name. A new power, the Varmans, occupied Eastern Bengal, and a copper-plate of Ratnapāla<sup>4</sup> shows that even Kāmarūpa was hurling defiance at the king of Gauḍa at the beginning or middle of the eleventh century A.D.

## VI. DISINTEGRATION AND TEMPORARY REVIVAL

### 1. Mahīpāla II (1070-75 A.D.)

Vighrapāla III had three sons, viz., Mahīpāla II, Śūrapāla II, and Rāmapāla. Mahīpāla, the eldest, succeeded his father. His reign was full of troubles. There were conspiracies against the king, and he was led to believe that his brother Rāmapāla was plotting to seize the kingdom for himself. Accordingly Mahīpāla threw both

<sup>1</sup> The Tibetan historian Tāranātha mentions that Yakshapāla, a son of Rāmapāla, was elected king three years before the latter's death (*Tar.* 251). It illustrates the confused character of the historical tradition preserved by Tāranātha. For while Yakshapāla might have been a contemporary of Rāmapāla during the early part of the reign of the latter, and ruled over a portion of the Pāla territory, he was certainly not the son of Rāmapāla. The fact that Yakshapāla lived in local tradition for five centuries attests to his political importance.

<sup>2</sup> *DENI.* I. 348.

<sup>3</sup> *DUS.* I. No. 2, pp. 134-35.

<sup>4</sup> Bargaon Grant. *JASB.* LXVII. 115.

Rāmapāla and Śūrapāla into prison. But this did not save either his throne or his life. Ere long he had to face a well-organised rebellion of his vassal chiefs. Mahīpāla's army was ill-equipped, but disregarding the counsel of his advisers he advanced to fight the rebels. He was defeated and killed, and Varendrī passed into the hands of Divya, a high official of the Kaivarta caste.

This revolution and the subsequent recovery of Varendrī by Rāmapāla are described in detail in the contemporary Sanskrit Kāvya *Rāmacharita*.<sup>1</sup> This unique historical document enables us to give a critical account of the history of Bengal for half a century (1070-1120 A.D.) with wealth of details such as are not available in regard to any other period. Unfortunately, the historical value of this book is considerably reduced by the fact that its author, Sandhyākara Nandī, was a partisan of Rāmapāla, and cannot be regarded as an unprejudiced and impartial critic of either Mahīpāla or the Kaivarta chiefs who were enemies of Rāmapāla. While, therefore, the main incidents in the reign of Mahīpāla II, mentioned in *Rāmacharita* and referred to above, may be regarded as historical, we should not accept, without due reservation, the author's descrip-

<sup>1</sup> The unique manuscript of the Sanskrit poem *Rāmacharita* (referred to as *RC* in the text) was discovered in Nepal in 1897 by the late Mahāmahopādhyāya Paṇḍit Haraprasād Śāstrī. The following extracts from his description will give the reader some idea of this important text, the only authentic historical work of ancient Bengal known to us.

"It is a curious work. It is written throughout in double *entendre*..... Read one way, it gives the connected story of the *Rāmāyana*. Read another way, it gives the history of Rāmapāladeva of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal. The story of *Rāmāyana* is known, but the history of Rāmapāla is not known. So it would have been a difficult task to bring out the two meanings distinctly. But fortunately the ms. contained not only the text of the *Rāmacharita*, but a commentary of the first canto and of 36 (*sic*, really 35) verses of the second. The commentary portion of the manuscript then abruptly came to an end. The commentary, as may be expected, gives fuller account of the reign of Rāmapāla than the text.....

"The author of the text is Sandhyākara Nandī, who composed the work in the reign of Madanapāla Deva, the second son of Rāmapāla. The author enjoyed exceptional opportunities of knowing the events of Rāmapāla's reign and those of his successors, as his father was the Sāndhivigrahika, or the Minister of Peace and War of Rāmapāla."

The text was first edited by MM. H. P. Śāstrī and published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal (*MASB*, III No. 1). It was re-edited, with a complete commentary and English translation, by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Dr. R. G. Basak, and Paṇḍit Nanigopal Banerji, and published by the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, in 1939. These two editions will be referred to respectively as *RC*.<sup>1</sup> and *RC*.<sup>2</sup> All quotations from English translation refer to *RC*.<sup>2</sup> For all references to text after II. 35, cf. *RC*.<sup>1</sup>, as *RC*.<sup>2</sup> offers no commentary to these verses. For other verses either may be consulted. For a fuller discussion (with references) of the historical facts dealt with in this chapter cf. Introduction to *RC*.<sup>3</sup>

tion of Mahīpāla as hard-hearted (i. 32),<sup>1</sup> not adhering to either truth or good policy (i. 36),<sup>2</sup> and resorting to fraudulent tricks (i. 32, 37); particularly, as in one passage (i. 29), he has referred to Mahīpāla as a good and great king (*rājapravara*).

It is to be noted, however, that there is nothing recorded in *Rāmacharita* to justify the belief, now generally held on the authority of MM. Śāstrī, that Mahīpāla II was an oppressive king, and that specially the 'Kaivartas were smarting under his oppression.'<sup>3</sup> Only two important specific facts, as mentioned above, are noted against him. As regards the first, viz., that he imprisoned his brothers Rāmapāla and Śūrapāla (i. 33), the author has the candour to admit that the king was instigated to this iniquitous act by false reports, sedulously propagated by wicked people, to the effect that Rāmapāla, being an able and popular prince, was scheming to usurp the throne (i. 37). The author, of course, implies that Rāmapāla had really no such intention. But this is a point on which we may not place full confidence on his opinions and statements.

The second charge against Mahīpāla is that he was addicted to warfare (i. 22), and that disregarding the advice of his wise and experienced ministers, he led a small ill-equipped force against the powerful army of the numerous rebel chiefs (*ananta-sāmanta-chakra*) (i. 31). The author has unfortunately omitted all details by which we could judge of the actions of the king. He does not say, for example, what was the alternative policy suggested by the experienced ministers; and considering the part played by high officials like Divya, Mahīpāla may certainly be excused for not putting implicit faith in their advice. On the whole, it is impossible, from the brief and scattered references in *Rāmacharita*, to form an accurate idea either of the reign or of the character of Mahīpāla II. It is, no doubt, true that he succumbed to a revolt of his feudatory chiefs. This does not, however, necessarily mean, and *Rāmacharita* does not support the contention in any way, that the king was particularly wicked and oppressive to his people, far less that his personal character or policy was the direct or indirect cause of the revolt.

It is far more probable that this revolt, like other revolts in the Pāla kingdom about the same time, was the effect of the

<sup>1</sup> The figures within brackets refer to cantos and verses of RC.

<sup>2</sup> The actual reading of the commentary is '*bhūtam satyam nayo nīlam taylorarakshane yuktah prasaktah*.' But MM. Śāstrī emended the text by omitting one 'ra' in '*taylorarakshane*' which gives just the opposite meaning. There is no justification for this change, as the context of the passage supports the actual reading.

<sup>3</sup> RC. 13.



weakness of the central authority and the general tendency of disruption in different parts of the kingdom. That king Mahipāla II could not rise equal to the occasion, and his personal gifts were not sufficient to enable him to pass safely through the crisis, admit of no doubt. But there is nothing to support the view that, judged by the ordinary standard, he was a particularly bad king, or that he was in any way specially responsible for the fall of the Pāla kingdom. As against this opinion, which is now generally held, the extant evidence would in no way militate against the contention that Mahipāla II was perhaps a victim to circumstances over which he had no control, and that, as a king, he was more sinned against than sinning.

## 2. Varendrī under the Kaivarta chiefs

The part played by the Kaivarta chief Divya<sup>1</sup> in the revolution that cost Mahipāla his life and throne is by no means quite clear. From one passage in *Rāmacharita* (I. 38), it seems very likely that Divya was a high official under Mahipāla. There is no specific reference in *Rāmacharita* that he headed the rebellion of the feudatory chiefs, or even took part in their encounter with Mahipāla. Yet it is expressly mentioned that the Kaivarta king occupied a major portion of the kingdom after having killed king Mahipāla (I. 29). Further light is thrown on this episode by the verse I. 38. It says that Varendrī, the ancestral home of the Pālas, was seized by Divya, who was a *dasyu* and *upadhi-vratī*. The interpretation of the latter phrase has given rise to much controversy. The commentary explains *vrata* as some action undertaken as an obligatory duty, and then adds, *chhadmani vrati*. *Chhadman*, like *upadhi*, means 'plea, pretext, fraud, dishonesty, trick' etc., and the natural interpretation of the two qualifying epithets is that Divya was really a villain, though he pretended that his actions were inspired by a sense of duty. In other words, though his real motive in rising against the king was nothing but ambition and self-aggrandisement, he hid it under the cloak of a patriotic action. According to the other interpretation, Divya was not a rebel at heart, but had to pretend to act as such from a paramount sense of duty. The first interpretation appears to be more fair and reasonable, and is supported by the epithet '*dasyu*' which hardly fits in with the second.

<sup>1</sup> The name is written variously in RC. as Divya (I. 38), Divvoka (I. 38-39 commentary) and Divoka (I. 31 comm.).

It seems to be quite clear from this passage as well as the scattered references throughout the first canto of *Rāmācharita*, that its author regarded Divya as an evil-doer, and his seizure of the throne as a rebellion, pure and simple.<sup>1</sup> We could hardly expect any other view from the court-poet and a loyal official of the Pālas, and probably the author unduly exaggerated the faults and shortcomings of the enemy. It is quite likely that a writer, belonging to Divya's party, would have represented him in a more favourable light. But the fact remains that the *Rāmācharita*, the only evidence at present available to us, does not in any way support the view, sedulously propagated by a section of writers in Bengal, that Divya was prompted to seize the throne by the highly patriotic motive of saving the country from the oppressions of the ruling king, or that like Gopāla, the founder of the Pāla dynasty, he was called to the throne by the united voice of the people to save them in a great crisis.<sup>2</sup> In spite of strong popular sentiments to the contrary, we are bound to presume, until further evidence is available, that like so many other rebels in all ages and countries, Divya, a highly placed officer of State, took advantage of the weakness of the central authority, the confusion in the kingdom, and perhaps also of dissensions among the royal brothers, to kill his master and king, and seize the throne for himself. There is no need to invent pretexts, or to offer excuses, for an act which was in that age neither unusual nor regarded as unnatural.<sup>3</sup>

As already noted above, *Rāmācharita* is silent on the point whether Divya actually joined the rebellion of the feudal chiefs. The natural inference is, of course, that he was the leader of this rebellion which proved successful and gave him the throne. It is,

<sup>1</sup> Thus v. i. 12 refers to the Kaivarta chief as 'bad king' (*kutsita mah Kaivarta-nripah*); v. i. 24 refers to unholy or unfortunate civil revolution (*anikam dharma-viplavam*); and v. i. 27 describes the affray or disturbance (*damaram*) caused by the enemy as a world calamity (*bhavasya apadam*).

<sup>2</sup> A movement was recently set on foot by a section of the Kaivarta or Mahishya community in Bengal to perpetuate the memory of Divya, on the basis of the view-points noted above. They refused to regard him as a rebel, and held him up as a great hero called to the throne by the people of Varendri to save it from the oppressions of Mahipāla II. An annual ceremony, *Divya-smṛiti-utsava*, was organised by them, and the speeches made on these occasions by eminent historians like Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Rai Bahadur Rama Prasad Chanda, and Dr. Upendra Nath Ghoshal, who presided over these functions, sought to support the popular views (cf. *Bhāratavarsha*, 1942, pp. 18 ff). This movement died a natural death within a few years.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of this point, and a view of Divya's rebellion in its true perspective, cf. Dr. R. C. Majumdar's article 'The Revolt of Divyaka against Mahipāla II and other revolts in Bengal' (*DUS*. I. No. 2, pp. 125 ff).

however, also not improbable, that he played a waiting game; and as soon as the army of Mahipāla was worsted in the battle-field, he boldly seized the throne and killed the king. Whatever view may be correct, there is no doubt that Mahipāla met his death in the hands of Divya, and not during the reign of his nephew Bhīma, as has been upheld by some.<sup>1</sup>

After his accession to the throne, Divya probably came into conflict with Jātavarman, king of Eastern Bengal. The Belāva copper-plate of Bhojavarman claims that 'Jātavarman brought to disgrace the strength of the arms of Divya.'<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to come to any definite conclusion from such an isolated reference, beyond the obvious fact that the two independent kingdoms of Varendrī and Vaṅga were hostile to each other.

Of the activities of Divya, after he had usurped the throne, *Rāmacharita* tells us very little. But the fact that three members of the family ruled in succession (i. 39) shows that Divya made his position quite secure in Varendrī. Not only did Rāmapāla's efforts to recover Varendrī prove futile (i. 40-41), but even his own dominions seem to have been invaded by Divya or his partisans (Ins. No. 46, v. 15). These prove that Divya was an able and powerful ruler. He was succeeded by his younger brother Rudoka, but nothing is known of him.

The next king Bhīma,<sup>3</sup> the son and successor of Rudoka, is highly praised as a ruler by the author of *Rāmacharita*. He devotes seven verses (ii. 21-27) to a very flattering description of the personal virtues of Bhīma and the riches and strength of his kingdom. It is not, however, easy to reconcile all these praises with the statement that Varendrī was oppressed with cruel taxation before Rāmapāla's conquest (iii. 27), and, therefore, presumably in the reign of Bhīma. On the whole, we may reasonably conclude that Bhīma restored peace and prosperity (i. 39) after the period of turmoil that must have accompanied or followed the expulsion of the Pālas, and that the Kaivarta rulers had built up their new kingdom on a strong foundation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dr. U. N. Ghoshal's Presidential Address at the *Divya-smṛiti-utsava*, p. 19. It is true that verse i. 29 of *RC.* does not name the Kaivarta king who murdered Mahipāla. But verse 15 of the Manahali cp. (Ins. No. 46) proves that Divya was alive after Rāmapāla had ascended the throne, i.e. after the death of Rāmapāla's elder brothers Mahipāla and Śūrapāla. The Kaivarta king, who murdered Mahipāla, according to *RC.* (i. 29), must, therefore, be Divya, and not Bhīma who was not a king at that time.

<sup>2</sup> *IB.* 14; also *infra* p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> The expression '*yathokta-kramena*' in the commentary to i. 39 proves that Divya, Rudoka, and Bhīma ruled in unbroken succession.

<sup>4</sup> The name of Bhīma has been preserved in local tradition. A rampart near

While Bhīma was busy consolidating his dominions in Varendrī, preparations were going on beyond his frontier which ultimately overwhelmed him and destroyed the fortunes of his family.

### 3. The reign of Rāmapāla

It has been noted above that Rāmapāla and his elder brother Śūrapāla were both in prison when Mahipāla II was defeated by the rebellious chiefs. What became of them after this catastrophe is not expressly stated. MM. Śāstri's statement that "they were rescued by their friends,"<sup>1</sup> presumably even before the revolution, is not borne out by RC. It is clear, however, that somehow or other they managed to escape and leave Varendrī. Although there is no subsequent reference to Śūrapāla in RC., it is clear from v. 14 of the Manahali copper-plate of Madanapāla (No. 46) that Śūrapāla ascended the throne. Of the events of his reign we know nothing. But the silence of RC. about Śūrapāla's later history does not justify the assumption made by R. D. Banerji that he was murdered by Rāmapāla.<sup>2</sup> All that we may reasonably infer is that Śūrapāla played no part in the great task of recovering Varendrī, which devolved, after his death, upon his younger brother Rāmapāla who succeeded him.

After the usurpation of the throne of Varendrī by Divya, Rāmapāla (and presumably also his elder brother Śūrapāla) ruled over the remaining part of the Pāla kingdom, which probably included at first parts of Magadha and Rāḍhā, and was later confined to Vaṅga or a part of it.<sup>3</sup>

For some time, Rāmapāla remained inactive, unable to adopt any effective means to recover Varendrī (i. 40). But then some new danger arose, and after consultation with his sons and ministers, he resolved on firm and prompt action (i. 42). The exact nature of this new danger is not disclosed in RC., but perhaps it refers to Divya's campaigns against Rāmapāla referred to above. It was

Bogra is still known as *Bhīmer Jāngāl*. MM. Śāstri held the view (RC.<sup>1</sup> 13) that Bhīma 'built a Damara, a suburban city, close to the capital of the Pāla empire.' The only foundation for this statement is the expression wrongly read by him as 'damaram-upapuram' in the commentary to i. 27. The expression, as correctly read in RC.,<sup>2</sup> viz., 'damaram-upaplāvam,' shows that there is no reference to any city, far less to any capital city, founded by Bhīma, as Mr. R. D. Banerji imagined (PB. 91; BI. 291).

<sup>1</sup> RC.<sup>1</sup> 13.

<sup>2</sup> BI. 280.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. RC.<sup>2</sup> xxiii. where evidences are discussed with full references. The colophon of a MS. proves the rule of Rāmapāla in Magadha in his 25th regnal year (Śāstri-Cat. i. 168).

probably the danger of losing even the remaining part of his kingdom that forced Rāmapāla to activity.<sup>1</sup>

In sheer despair Rāmapāla begged for help in all possible quarters. The proud inheritor of the throne of Dharmapāla and Devapāla literally travelled from door to door with a view to enlisting the sympathy and support of the powerful chiefs who were formerly, and many of whom still nominally, his vassal chiefs (I. 43). His efforts proved successful. By a lavish offer of land and enormous wealth, he gained over to his side a number of powerful chiefs who possessed well-equipped forces (I. 45). The detailed list of these independent or semi-independent chiefs of Bengal, contained in RC,<sup>2</sup> must be regarded as of utmost historical importance. Apart from giving us an accurate idea of the strength of Rāmapāla in that supreme hour of trial, this list of *de facto* independent chiefs furnishes a vivid and interesting picture of the political dismemberment of Bengal caused by the decline of the power and authority of the Pālas.

Foremost among Rāmapāla's allies was his maternal uncle Mathana, better known as Mahana, the Rāshṭrakūṭa chief who joined Rāmapāla with his two sons, Mahāmāṇḍalika Kāṇharadeva and Suvarṇadeva, and his brother's son Mahāpratīhāra Śivarājadeva. Next in point of importance was Bhīmayaśas, the king of Piṭhī and lord of Magadha. The exact location of Piṭhī is not known but it was certainly in Bihar.<sup>3</sup> Of the other allied chiefs that joined Rāmapāla in his expedition against Varendrī, *Rāmacharita* specifically mentions only the following :

1. Viraguṇa, king<sup>4</sup> of Koṭāṭavī in the south.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The new danger might also refer to the invasion of the Paramāra king Lakṣmadēva who ruled some time before A.D. 1097, the earliest known date of his successor (*DJINI*, II. 882). It is said that "desirous of capturing matchless elephants he first proceeded to Hari's quarter (i.e. the east)," and "then, just as dread, entered the town of the Lord of Gauḍa" (v. 38, *EI*. II. 186, 192). It is not certain whether he entered Gauḍa (which was then probably in possession of Divya or Bhīma), or the capital city of Rāmapāla, who bore the title, or at least was known as, the lord of Gauḍa. In any case, we cannot say anything about the nature and result of this raid by the Paramāra king.

<sup>2</sup> RC. II. 5, 6, 8. The text gives the names in a very cryptic form. These would not have been intelligible but for the commentary, which not only gives the full name of each king and the locality of his kingdom, but also adds some historical details in many cases. For a full discussion of these cf. RC.<sup>2</sup> pp. XXV-XXVIII, which also give references to authorities for the brief statements made in the text.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ch. IX § 3 *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> The word 'king' is used where the commentary expressly mentions any royal epithet. In other cases the word 'ruler' has been used.

<sup>5</sup> Koṭa may be identified with Koṭeśvara to the east of Viṣṇupur. *Ain-i-Albāri* refers to Mahal Koṭ-des (Transl. II. 144). According to Beames, it

2. Jayasimha, king of Daṇḍabhukti (Midnapur district).
3. Vikramarāja, ruler of Bāla-Balabhī.<sup>1</sup>
4. Lakshmīśūra, lord of Aparā-Mandāra (Hooghly district),<sup>2</sup> and head of the group of feudal chiefs of the forest (*samast-āṭavika-sāmanta-chakra-chūdāmaṇi*).
5. Śūrapāla, ruler of Kujaṇṇaṭī (about 14 miles north of Nayādumkā in Santal Parganas).<sup>3</sup>
6. Rudraśikhara, ruler of Tailakampa (Manbhum district).<sup>4</sup>
7. Bhāskara or Mayagalasimha, king of Uchchhāla.<sup>5</sup>
8. Pratāpasimha, king of Dhekkariya (Dhekuri near Katwa in the Burdwan district).<sup>6</sup>
9. Narasimhārjuna, king of Kayaṅgala-maṇḍala (south of Rājmaḥal).<sup>7</sup>

was a large *parganā* in the northern and central part of Puri (*JRAS.* 1896, p. 762). The former identification seems more likely.

<sup>1</sup> Mm. H. P. Śāstrī identified it with Bāgdī (*RC.* 14). Bāla-Balabhī, according to *RC.*, was close to Devagrāma which is located by N. Vasu in Nadiyā (*VJI.* 198). *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions 'Deul' which is identified by Beames with the ancient stone fort of Deulgāon on the boundary of the districts of Midnapur and Balasore. If this Deulgāon represents ancient Devagrāma, we may find in the *parganā* of Bibli (also referred to in *Ain-i-Akbari*) a contracted form of old Bāla-Balabhī. Bibli has been identified with Pipli, the site of the earliest English factory in Bengal, at the mouth of the Suvarparekhā river (*JRAS.* 1896, pp. 746, 752).

<sup>2</sup> Mandāra has been identified with *sarkar* Madāran, locally called Mandāran. It comprised, according to Beames, "a very long straggling strip of territory running from Birbhum in the North to the junction of the Hooghly and Rupnārāyan rivers in the South" (*JRAS.* 1896, p. 106). Mandāran is now known as Bhitaragarh Mandāran (for Blochman's identification, cf. *Proc. ASB.* 1870, p. 117), about seven miles west of the town of Jahanabad or Arambagh on the Darkeswar river. De Barro's map (c. 1550 A.D.) shows Mandaram as an important city on a branch of the Ganges river, almost due south of Saptagrān. According to Beames, a local Paṇḍit derives the name from *Manda* (bad) and *araṇya* (forest). Aparā-Mandāra has also been interpreted as on the other side of Mandāra, the famous hill about 90 miles south of Bhagalpur (*IA.* 1930, p. 244).

<sup>3</sup> G. Mitra, *Bīrbhūmer Itihāsa*, i. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Identified with Telkupi. The region is still known as Sikharbhum, perhaps after the royal family (*VJI.* 199). *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to the *parganā* Shergarh, commonly called Sakharbhum. Beames identifies it with Sikharbhumi, "an immense *parganā* occupying the whole western angle of Burdwan between the Dāmodar and Ajay rivers" (*JRAS.* 1896, pp. 106-7).

<sup>5</sup> This has been identified with 'Jain Ujhial,' a *parganā* in Birbhum (*VJI.* 199). Mr. R. D. Banerji objects to this identification on the ground that there are many other *parganās* called Ujhial (*BI.* 289-90), a fact already pointed out by Beames, who takes the word to mean 'high land' (*JRAS.* 1896, p. 93).

<sup>6</sup> *BI.* 290. The location of Dhekkari in Assam, originally propounded by Mr. N. Vasu, and supported by Mr. N. G. Majumdar (*IB.* 150) is less likely.

<sup>7</sup> The old town of Kānkjol lies near the East Indian Railway line about 20 miles south of Rājmaḥal. For a detailed account cf. Beames in *JRAS.* 1896, p. 96.

10. Chaṇḍārjuna of Saṅkaṭagrāma.<sup>1</sup>
11. Vijayarāja of Nidrāvali.<sup>2</sup>
12. Dvorapavardhana, ruler of Kauśāmbī (Rajshahi or Bogra district).<sup>3</sup>
13. Soma of Paduānvā.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to Mahāna, Bhīmayaśas, and the thirteen rulers mentioned above, Rāmapāla was joined by other allied chiefs whose names are not given (II. 6). An analysis of the list shows that, leaving aside the localities whose identity is unknown or doubtful, almost all the allies of Rāmapāla belonged to South Bihar and South-West Bengal.

If the identification of Kauśāmbī with Kusumbi in either Rajshahi or Bogra be accepted, we must hold that Rāmapāla's diplomacy succeeded in attaching isolated chiefs, even of Varendrī, to his side. This must have proved disastrous to the cause of Bhīma, as he was now liable to attack from within. Besides, it proves that Varendrī did not solidly stand by him, and there was disruption within the newly founded kingdom.

Being joined by the large and well-equipped forces of the confederate chiefs, consisting of cavalry, elephants, and infantry, Rāmapāla felt strong enough to make an attempt towards the recovery of Varendrī. He despatched a force under his Mahā-pratihāra, the Rāshtrakūṭa Śivarāja, which crossed the Ganges and devastated Varendrī (I. 47-49). There is no reference to any pitched battle, but presumably the frontier guards of Bhīma were defeated, and the way was made clear for the crossing of the main force (I. 50).

As soon as Śivarāja reported to Rāmapāla that his army had occupied the frontier posts, the entire force of Rāmapāla crossed

<sup>1</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to the *parganā* 'Sakot' in *sarkar* Satgaon. The name 'Sakot' resembles 'Saṅkaṭa,' but Beames emends the former as Siguna (*JRAS.* 1896, p. 104). Saṅkaṭagrāma is probably the same as Saṅka-koṭa, referred to in *Vallāla-charita* (II. 4) and Sankunāt referred to in *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* (cf. Ch. VIII. App. II, III).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *RC.* xxvii.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. R. D. Banerji identifies it with the "modern *parganā* of Kusumba in the Rajshahi district." (*JASB.* N.S. x. 125). But it may also be identified with the *parganā* Tappe Kusumbi in the Bogra district.

<sup>4</sup> M.M. Śāstrī doubtfully identifies Paduānvā with Pabna (*RC.* 14), but there is no evidence in support of it, except the similarity of the two names. Reference may be made to *parganā* Paunan in the Hooghly district (Hunter, III. 416). The name Paunan may be easily derived from Paduānvā.

Similarly, Paduānvā resembles Pādumbā, a village mentioned in a manuscript of *Krishṇa-prema-taraṅginī* of Bhāgavatāchārya, dated Śaka 1620 (=1698 A.D.), and preserved in the Dacca University. This village Pādumbā, is said to be in 'pargane Bijanagar' and 'sarkar Panjara.' Bijanagar is mentioned as a *parganā* of *sarkar* Pinjora or Panjara (*Ain.* III. 136) and comprised the greater part of Dinajpur district (*JASB.* XLII. 215; Hunter, VII. 437, 449).

the Ganges by means of a flotilla of boats, and safely reached the "northern bank" (II. 9-11). The express reference in *RC.* to the "northern bank" seems to show that Rāmapāla proceeded from his base in Central or Southern Bengal, and crossed the Padmā. This supports the view, mentioned above, that at the time of this expedition, Vaṅga was the chief stronghold of Rāmapāla's power. But the considerable shiftings of the courses of the Ganges and the Padmā rivers preclude any definite conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

After Rāmapāla had crossed the Ganges with his huge army, Bhīma opposed him, and a pitched battle took place. The tumultuous battle which is described in nine verses (II. 12-20) was conducted with vigour and ferocity on each side. Both Bhīma and Rāmapāla took a very active part in it, and kept close to each other (II. 14). But 'by an evil turn of destiny,' Bhīma, seated on his elephant, was taken prisoner. This decided the fate of the battle. Bhīma's army fled and his camp was plundered by the 'unrestrained soldiers' of Rāmapāla (II. 29-30). But shortly after the capture of Bhīma, his forces were rallied by his friend Hari, who put up a valiant fight and at first scored some successes (II. 38ff). But Rāmapāla's son, who was put in charge of the fight, "exhausted the golden pitchers by his war-time gifts" (II. 43), and evidently managed to create some discord between Hari and Bhīma's followers which caused obstruction to each other (II. 41). Finally, Hari was won over.<sup>2</sup> This sealed the fate of Bhīma's army, and the whole of his kingdom lay prostrate before Rāmapāla.

After having crushed this rising, Rāmapāla wreaked a terrible vengeance upon Bhīma. Bhīma was taken to the place of execution where important members of his family were killed before his very eyes. Then Bhīma himself was killed by means of a 'multitude of arrows' (II. 45-49).<sup>3</sup> Thus ended the life of Bhīma and the rebellion in Varendrī.

After the final collapse of the forces of Bhīma, Rāmapāla took possession of his immense riches, and "occupied after a long time the dearest land of Varendrī" (III. 1). His first task was, of course, the restoration of peace and order. We learn from *RC.*, that in addition to the insecurity of life and property caused by the late troubles, the country was suffering from heavy and oppressive taxation (III. 27). Rāmapāla reduced the taxation, promoted cultivation, constructed great works of public utility, and introduced

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra* pp. 3 ff.

<sup>2</sup> This account radically differs from the version of MM. H. P. Śāstri. For full discussion cf. *RC.* xxx-xxxI.

<sup>3</sup> For Rāmapāla's conduct towards Bhīma, cf. *RC.* xxix-xxx.



regular administration. The country was rid of the frightful rule; the (wholesale) massacre and arson caused by the enemies was removed; and the land, being brought under cultivation, flourished.<sup>1</sup> Rāmapāla left the cares of government to his son (or sons) who, acting under his orders, maintained good government and restored internal order.<sup>2</sup>

Rāmapāla fixed his capital at Rāmāvati.<sup>3</sup> Whether the city was founded by him, or he improved an already existing place, is not quite clear. The *RC.* gives a long description of its beauty and splendour,<sup>4</sup> and it appears from later records (No. 46) that the city continued to be the capital of the Pālas till the end.

After having consolidated his power in Varendrī, Rāmapāla made an attempt to re-establish the old glory of the dynasty by subjugating neighbouring territories in the east and south. The *RC.* tells us (iii. 44) that Rāmapāla was propitiated by a Varman king of the East for the latter's own protection (or deliverance), and presented by him with an elephant and his own chariot. This Varman king must have belonged to the well-known dynasty ruling in East Bengal with Vikramapura as capital.<sup>5</sup>

Rāmapāla also carried his conquests further and brought Kāmarūpa under his control. The victorious campaign was evidently led by an allied or feudal chief who was greatly honoured by Rāmapāla (iii. 47). The vanquished king of Assam was probably Dharmapāla.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *RC.*<sup>2</sup> iii. 27, 31, 42.

<sup>2</sup> *RC.* iv. 1-3. The expression *sūnu-samarpita-rājya* might refer to one or more sons; v. 6 also refers to Rājyapāla and his brother.

<sup>3</sup> See *supra* p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> For the erroneous character of MM. Śāstri's views in this respect, cf. *RC.*<sup>2</sup> xxxi.

<sup>5</sup> The history of the Varman dynasty has been discussed in ch. vii. The Varman king, referred to in *RC.* is probably Harivarman, and it is tempting to identify him with the chief Hari, the great friend of Bhīma, who rallied the forces of the latter after his defeat, and fought stubbornly with Rāmapāla. Reference is made to a chief called Hari in a subsequent verse of *RC.*, and it is very reasonable to hold that the same person is referred to. It would then appear that after the death of Bhīma, Rāmapāla won over Hari (now called *īśa* or king) to his side, and established him in a position of great influence (iii. 32). We are further told that the two kings, meaning presumably Rāmapāla and Hari, both of whom were rich in cavalry and very powerful, met together in Rāmāvati and shone for a long time in each other's close embrace (iii. 39-40). But although the identification appears plausible, there is no definite evidence in support of it.

<sup>6</sup> In the absence of a fairly accurate knowledge of the chronology of the kings of Kāmarūpa, it is impossible to say, with any degree of certainty, who was ruling in Kāmarūpa about this time. Hoernle assigned Ratnapāla to the first half of the eleventh century A.D. (*JASB.* LXVII. 102 ff), and if this view is accepted,

Rāmapāla also tried to expand his power in the south. The task was no doubt facilitated by the fact that the feudatory chiefs of Rāḍhā had rallied to his standard, and were evidently attached to his cause. Presumably with their help, he invaded Orissa and extended his conquests up to Kalinga.<sup>1</sup> Orissa was at that time in a state of political disintegration. The later Eastern Gaṅga kings of Kalinga were trying to expand their dominions in the north. King Devendravarman Rājaraja claims to have conquered Oḍradeśa

Dharmapāla may be regarded as the contemporary of Rāmapāla (*Kām. Śās.* 146). For other views, cf. *IHQ.* xii. 630.

The Silimpur Stone Ins. (*EI.* xiii. 283) refers to king Jayapāla of Kāmarūpa (v. 22) whose name is not included in the official list of kings of Kāmarūpa (*Kām. Śās.* 146 ff). He may be the unknown allied king, who conquered Kāmarūpa for Rāmapāla. But it is also not impossible that the 'highly honoured' Tiṅgyadeva whose revolt is referred to in the Kamauli Grant (No. 50), was the allied king and conqueror of Kāmarūpa. MM. Śāstri's view that Mayana was the name of this conqueror (*RC.*<sup>1</sup> 15) is due to an error in the reading of the text (*RC.*<sup>2</sup> xxxiii).

<sup>1</sup> The incident is referred to in a verse (iii. 45) which runs as follows:—

"He (Rāmapāla) did favour to the vanquished king of Utkala, who was born in the lineage of the ornament of Bhava (Śiva) (*Bhava-bhūṣaṇa-santati*), and rescued the whole world (from the terror of) Kalinga, after having extirpated those robbers (of that place)."

The expression 'ornament of Śiva,' which denotes the family to which the vanquished king of Utkala belonged, has been variously interpreted, inasmuch as Nāga (serpent), Soma (moon), or Gaṅgā, which are the family-names of well-known ruling dynasties, may all be regarded as the ornaments of Śiva. H. P. Śāstri took the first meaning and held that Rāmapāla conquered Utkala and restored it to the Nāgavarṁśis (*RC.*<sup>1</sup> 15). Mr. R. D. Banerji accepted this view (*BI.* 298). Mr. N. G. Majumdar accepted this meaning of *Bhava-bhūṣaṇa*, but interpreted the verse in an altogether different way. He translated it as follows: "Rāmapāla favoured (or reinstated) the vanquished king of Utkala who possessed the territory of a *Bhava-bhūṣaṇa-santati* (i.e., the Nāgas)." He held that this king of Utkala was either Harivarman or his son who had overthrown the Nāga king and made himself master of Utkala (*IB.* 30).

The Nāgavarṁśi kings are known from epigraphic records to have ruled in Bastar State in the Central Provinces, and possibly these kings are referred to in *RC.* iii. 43 as having been defeated by Rāmapāla. It seems to refer to 'Bhogāli' as the territory of the Nāgas, and the lexicographer Hemachandra refers to Bhogāvali as the Nāga capital. The inscriptions of the kings ruling in Bastar State at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. call them '*Nāgavarṁśodbhava Bhogavati-pura-var-śvara*' (*EI.* ix. 160 ff.; x. 25 ff.). The Nāgavarṁśi kings are not, however, known to have ruled in Orissa proper, i.e., the territory between the river Suvarṇarekhā and the Chilka Lake. The Nāgavarṁśi king Someśvaradeva, who ruled at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., refers to the king of Uḍra as a rival (*EI.* x. 26). It is, therefore, more reasonable to hold that the king of Utkala, defeated by Rāmapāla, belonged to the Somavarṁśi dynasty which is known to have been ruling in Orissa in the eleventh century A.D. (*DHNI.* i. 398 ff.). One of the Somavarṁśi rulers, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, as noted above (p. 148) claims to have raided Gaṇḍa and Rāḍhā. One of the last kings of this dynasty is named Udyotakeśari, and this dynasty is probably to be

some time before 1075 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Evidently the conquest of Orissa was not complete, for his son, the famous Anantavarman Chodagaṅga (1076-1147 A.D.), replaced the fallen lord of Utkala, some time before 1112 A.D.,<sup>2</sup> and claims in an inscription, dated 1118 A.D.,<sup>3</sup> to be decorated with the rank of entire sovereignty over the whole of Utkala. It appears, however, that Orissa was not finally conquered and annexed to the Eastern Gaṅga empire till shortly before 1135 A.D., for in an inscription<sup>4</sup> dated in that year, Anantavarman refers to his newly made conquests of three quarters including Utkala. It is probable that shortly after this he removed his capital to the city of Cuttack in Orissa.<sup>5</sup>

While the Eastern Gaṅgas were thus steadily encroaching upon Orissa from the south, that hapless country was also exposed to attacks from the north. We know from *Rāmacharita* that Jayasinha, king of Daṇḍabhukti, had defeated Karpakeśari, king of Utkala, before he joined Rāmapāla in his expedition against Bhīma. Rāmapāla's conquest of Utkala might have been a continuation of the old campaign, and was undoubtedly facilitated by the success of his allied feudal chief. But it is also not unlikely that his invasion of Utkala was inspired by the dread of the rapidly growing power of the Eastern Gaṅgas. Subsequent conquests of Anantavarman Chodagaṅga right up to the bank of the Ganges<sup>6</sup> show that Rāma-

identified with the Keśari dynasty which, according to *Mādlā-pañji* or the Chronicles of Orissa, ruled in that kingdom till it was conquered by Chodagaṅga in 1132 A.D. The *RC.* refers to a king of Utkala named Karpakeśari who was defeated by Jayasinha, king of Daṇḍabhukti and an ally of Rāmapāla (II. 6). This definitely proves the rule of Keśari kings in Orissa during the reign of Rāmapāla. According to *Mādlā-pañji*, Suvarṇakeśari, the last ruler of this line, was on the throne between c. 1123-32 A.D. Mr. N. N. Das Gupta even goes so far as to assert that the *Bhava-bhūṣaṇa* of *RC.* means Keśari dynasty, as the serpents are but the *Keśara* or mane of Śiva (*IA.* LIX. 244). According to Mr. R. P. Chanda, the king of Utkala referred to in *RC.* was Chodagaṅga of the Gaṅga dynasty which traced its descent from the moon (*GR.* 51).

<sup>1</sup> Dirghasi Ins., v. 5. *EL.* IV. 314 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Korni cp. *JAHR.* I. 118 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Vizagapatam cp. *IA.* XVIII. 163 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Śrī-Kūrmam Ins. *SH.* v. No. 1335; quoted by R. Subba Rao (*JAHR.* VII. 57, 59, 64).

<sup>5</sup> The *Mādlā-pañji* states that Chodagaṅga defeated the last king of the Keśari dynasty Suvarṇakeśari in A.D. 1134, and succeeded to the Utkala kingdom and transferred his capital to Cuttack (quoted by R. Subba Rao, *JAHR.* VII. 57). According to Fleet's version, Chodagaṅga's conquest took place in 1132 A.D. (*EL.* III. 336).

<sup>6</sup> According to Śrī-Kūrmam Ins. (*SH.* v. No. 1335), dated 1135 A.D., Anantavarman Chodagaṅga returned in that year to his capital after subduing the Western, Northern, and Eastern countries, and bringing the whole country, lying between the Ganges and the Godāvarī rivers under his firm control (*JAHR.* VII.

pāla's apprehensions were not probably without some reasonable foundations. As Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga and Rāmapāla both claim to have favoured or re-instated the lord of Utkala, it is not difficult to infer that Orissa was only a pawn in a bigger game, and that the two rival kings tried to thwart each other's ambition by putting up their protégés on the throne of Orissa. It may be surmised from what has been said above that Rāmapāla's protégé was a Somavaṁśī Keśarī king. Evidently this Keśarī king had been defeated by Rājarāja Devendravarman, c. 1075 A.D., and replaced by a nominee of the latter. Some time later Rāmapāla helped the defeated king (or his successor) and re-instated him. About 1112 A.D. Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga again replaced the old king, set up by his father, or his successor.

In this way the duel between the Pāla and Eastern Gaṅga kings was carried on at the expense of the unfortunate kingdom of Orissa. It was not perhaps till after the death of Rāmapāla that the Gaṅga king succeeded in finally conquering Orissa and annexing it to his dominions. For, according to *Rāmacharita*, Rāmapāla protected the whole country right up to Kalinga by destroying the *nisācharas*.<sup>1</sup> In this word *nisāchara*, which means thief or 'chora,' there may be a veiled allusion to the Gaṅga king Choḍa-Gaṅga. Rāmapāla was undoubtedly helped in his task of keeping the Gaṅga king in check by the serious danger in which the latter was involved in the south. The Choḷa king Kulottuṅga (1070-1118 A.D.) invaded the Gaṅga dominions, and during the closing years of the eleventh, and possibly also in the early years of the twelfth century, the Choḷas penetrated to the northernmost parts of Kalinga.<sup>2</sup> Whether Rāmapāla had actually formed an alliance with the Choḷa

57). According to the inscriptions of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga, Narasimha II and Narasimha IV. Anantavarman's empire extended to the Godāvarī in the south, the city of Midhunapura or Midnapur in the north, the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Eastern Ghats in the west (*JAHRS.* vi. 215). The Kendupatna Plates refer to the destruction of the king of Mandāra's capital by Choḍagaṅga and his struggle on the banks of the Ganges (*JASB.* LXV. 229 ff.).

<sup>1</sup> III. 45. Mr. N. G. Majumdar inferred also from *RC.* III. 42 that Rāmapāla advanced up to the sea-coast of Orissa (*IB.* 29). But this view is wrong (cf. the commentary and English translation of the verse in *RC.*).

<sup>2</sup> The account of the Kalinga war of Kulottuṅga is given in details in the Tamil work *Kalīṅgattupparanī* (*IA.* XIX. 329 ff.) and this is corroborated by the *Drākshārāma Ins.* (*EI.* XXII. 138 ff.). According to this record, the general of Kulottuṅga "reduced to ashes the whole of Kalinga country, defeated the Gaṅga king, destroyed in battle Devendravarman and others, and planted a pillar of victory on the borders of the Oḍra country." As the editor points out, "the earliest notice of the conquest of Kalinga in the records of Kulottuṅga occurs in a stone inscription dated in the 26th year (=1096 A.D.), and as this is repeated in

king we do not know. The Tamil poem *Kalīngattupparani*, which describes the Chōla conquests of North Kālīṅga, also gives a long list of peoples who paid tributes to Kulottuṅga. It includes Vaṅgas, Vaṅgālas, and Magadhas. Kulottuṅga also assumed the title "Lord of the earth lying between the river Ganges and the river Kāverī."<sup>1</sup> Such general statements are, however, liable to suspicion, and cannot be accepted as historical, though it is not impossible that Rāmapāla might have thought it politic to maintain friendly relations with the Chōla king by nominally acknowledging his suzerainty over the disputed border land. For about this time the Chōla king was carrying on hostilities against both the Eastern Gaṅgas and the Later Chālukyas. As Rāmapāla's territory was also invaded by both these powers, he might have sought to make alliance with the Chōlas for securing support against the common enemies.

In a significant passage in *Rāmacharita* (III. 24), the expression 'adhārīta-Karṇātekshana-līlā' is used to describe the condition of Varendrī. The only reasonable interpretation seems to be that Varendrī was successfully guarded against the longing eyes of the Karṇāṭas. In other words, the Karṇāṭas made attempts to conquer Bengal, but were prevented by Rāmapāla from doing so.

The Karṇāṭa country was at this time ruled by the Chālukya king Vikramāditya VI. Reference has already been made above to the invasions of Bengal by him and his predecessors.<sup>2</sup> A feudatory chief of the Chālukya king named Ācha also claims to have carried on raids against Bengal towards the close of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century.<sup>3</sup> But even far more important than these raids was the establishment of two Karṇāṭa ruling families within the boundaries of the Pāla kingdom. These were the Senas in West Bengal, and Nānyadeva in Mithilā or North Bihar. The Senas were kept in check by Rāmapāla, though they ultimately drove the Pālas from Bengal, and their history has been dealt with in a separate chapter.<sup>4</sup> But, for the time being, Nānyadeva proved a far more dangerous foe. Up to the end of Mahīpāla I's reign, at any rate, Mithilā was included in the Pāla dominions. How long

the inscriptions of the 30th year and after, one is strongly inclined to believe that this should have taken place in or a little before A.D. 1096."

There might have been an invasion of Kālīṅga by Kulottuṅga in person later than 1096 A.D. For some of the inscriptions of the king dated in the 42nd and 45th years of his reign refer to an invasion of Kālīṅga in which the king himself is said to have set fire to Kālīṅga, destroyed in battle a number of chiefs, and took possession of the seven Kālīṅgas (*EI.* xxii. 141). Cf. also *Colas*, II. 33-37.

<sup>1</sup> Drākshārāma Ins., dated 1116 A.D. (*SII.* IV. No. 1029).

<sup>2</sup> See *supra* p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> See *infra* p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> See ch. VIII. *infra*.

the Pālas continued to rule in that region, it is now difficult to say. Nānya,<sup>1</sup> a feudatory chief of Karnatic origin, ascended the throne of Mithilā in 1097 A.D., and his dynasty ruled over that province for a long time. He claims to have broken the powers of Vaṅga and Gauḍa. The ruler of Vaṅga, with whom Nānyadeva fought, was probably Vijayasena who also claims in his record to have defeated Nānya. The lord of Gauḍa was probably Rāmapāla; for, on general grounds, it appears hardly likely that Nānya could have conquered Mithilā in 1097 A.D. without coming into conflict with Rāmapāla. In any case, it seems certain that Mithilā definitely passed out of the hands of the Pālas during the reign of Rāmapāla.

Another power with which Rāmapāla had come into conflict was the Gāhaḍavālas. The founder of this dynasty, Chandradeva, flourished during the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D. The dynasty ruled over nearly the whole of modern U.P., and their chief seat of authority was probably Benares. Although the imperial city of Kanauj was included in their dominions, and the kings styled themselves as lords of Kanyakubja, they were not infrequently referred to as kings of Benares or Kāśī.<sup>2</sup>

As the boundary of the Gāhaḍavāla kingdom probably touched that of the Pālas, hostility between the two was natural, and almost inevitable. The first reference to the conflict occurs in the Rāhan Grant,<sup>3</sup> dated 1109 A.D., which describes Govindachandra, son of the reigning Gāhaḍavāla king Madanapāla, as "terrific in cleaving the frontal globes of arrays of irresistible mighty large elephants from Gauḍa." The king of Gauḍa with whom Govindachandra fought was undoubtedly Rāmapāla. The expression used in the Gāhaḍavāla grant does not imply any decisive victory, far less territorial conquest, on the part of the Gāhaḍavāla prince, but certainly pays a high tribute to the forces of the Pālas. We do not know whether the clash was due to the aggressive action on the part of the Pālas or of the Gāhaḍavālas, but the latter view is more probable.

The result of the conflict during Rāmapāla's reign is perhaps indicated by the expression *dhṛita-madhyadeśa-tanīmā* used to describe the political condition of Varendrī (RC. III. 24). It means that Rāmapāla kept in check the growing power of Madhyadeśa, which undoubtedly refers to the Gāhaḍavāla kingdom. This may perhaps be partly attributed to a diplomatic marriage. For we know that Govindachandra married Kumāradevī, the princess of Piṭhī, whose mother was the daughter of Mahāṇa, the famous Rāshtrakūṭa chief of Aṅga and the maternal uncle of Rāmapāla.

<sup>1</sup> For the account of Nānyadeva that follows cf. *IIIQ.* VII. 679 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *DHNI.* I. 507-8.

<sup>3</sup> Line 9. (*IA.* XVIII. 16, 18).

This marriage alliance was probably engineered by Mahāṇa as a means to cement the alliance between the Pālas and the Gāhaḍavālas. But such political marriages can seldom check political ambitions for long, and in the present case, at any rate, the alliance did not long survive the death of Mahāṇa and Rāmapāla.

A review of the main incidents of Rāmapāla's career, such as may be gleaned from contemporary records, reflects the highest credit upon his character and abilities. Beginning his life as an exile from his native land Varendrī, and maintaining a precarious existence in a corner of his kingdom, Rāmapāla succeeded not only in re-establishing his sovereignty over the whole of Bengal, but also in extending his supremacy over Assam and Orissa. He crushed the power of a valiant and popular chief like Bhīma and successfully guarded his dominions against such formidable foes as the Gaṅgas, the Chālukyas, and the Gāhaḍavālas. The author of *Rāmācharita* says with legitimate pride that under Rāmapāla Varendrī enjoyed peace for a long period, and no wicked person dared disturb her tranquillity. This was probably true in regard to the whole of his kingdom towards the close of his reign.

Rāmapāla must have lived up to a considerably old age. According to the Manahali copper-plate,<sup>1</sup> he gave evidence of his valour in the battle-field even during the life-time of his father. He could not, therefore, have been very young when he ascended the throne after his two brothers. The Chandimau Image inscription (No. 42) shows that he must have ruled at least for forty-two years.<sup>2</sup> It may be safely presumed, therefore, that he lived up to the age of nearly seventy years. He was overwhelmed by the news of the death of his maternal uncle Mahāṇa, who, with his sons and nephew, had proved the staunchest supporter in his great hour of trial. Unable to bear the sorrow, Rāmapāla put an end to his own life by drowning himself in the Ganges at Monghyr according to the time-honoured custom in India.<sup>3</sup> Thus ended a great career, a worthy hero of the modern *Rāmāyana* composed by Sandhyākara Nandī.

#### VII. THE END OF THE PĀLA RULE

The reign of Rāmapāla might well have been regarded by his contemporaries as marking the revival of the greatness of the Pālas, and inaugurating a new era of peace and prosperity. But events

<sup>1</sup> Ins. No. 46, v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> According to Tāranātha, Rāmapāla ruled for sixty-four years.

<sup>3</sup> RC. iv. 8-10.

soon proved it to be but the last flickering of a lamp before its final extinction.

Rāmapāla had at least four sons. Of these, Vittapāla and Rājyapāla played important rôles during the life-time of their father,<sup>1</sup> though none of them ever ascended the throne. The two others, Kumārapāla and Madanapāla, who both ruled over the Pāla kingdom, are not referred to in *Rāmacharita* as having taken any part in the eventful reign of their father. The seniority among these four brothers according to age, and the reason why Kumārapāla superseded the other brothers, and his son was succeeded by Madanapāla, are all unknown to us. A mystery hangs over this period of history, and it is deepened by the concluding portion of *RC*. As the title of the book shows, the main purpose of the author was to describe the exploits of Rāmapāla (and of Rāma) and this is clearly stated in several verses at the end of the poem.<sup>2</sup> Yet the story is carried beyond the death of Rāmapāla for three more reigns. This may be explained by supposing that the author desired to bring the historical narrative down to his own time. But what is surprising is that while the poet dismisses in a single verse each of the reigns of Kumārapāla and his son Gopāla III, he devotes no less than thirty-six verses to the reign of Madanapāla. Whether this is purely out of devotion to the reigning king, or there were other motives also for so unceremoniously passing over the reigns of his two predecessors, it is difficult to say. That he deliberately ignored the importance of the two reigns may not unreasonably be concluded from his statement (iv. 15) that Madanapāla's accession removed the dart of grief resulting from the death of Rāmapāla. On the whole, it appears not unlikely that there were internal troubles during the period immediately following the death of Rāmapāla, and they were not over even when Kumārapāla ascended the throne. Kumārapāla was succeeded by his son Gopāla III. The single verse in *RC* referring to him (iv. 12), and a verse in the *Manahali* cp.<sup>3</sup> have led scholars to conclude that Gopāla III met with an unnatural death even while he was an infant.<sup>4</sup> Mr. R. D. Banerji has even

<sup>1</sup> *RC*. II. 36; iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Kavi-praśasti*, vv. 8, 9, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ins.* No. 46, v. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ins.* No. 44 would seem to belie the view, if it really belongs to the reign of Gopāla III, and is dated in year 14; for it would then appear that Gopāla III must have reigned for at least 14 years. Mr. N. G. Majumdar refers it to the reign of Gopāla III on palaeographic grounds (*ASI*. 1936-37, pp. 130). But the alphabets show great resemblance with those of the Dinajpur Pillar *Ins.*, which has been referred to the tenth century A.D., and although one or two letters show an advanced form, others like *j* and medial *e* show distinctly early forms. On the whole, it is difficult to say very definitely that the inscription belongs to the reign of Gopāla III and not Gopāla II. Besides, the figure read by Mr. Majumdar as 4



suggested that he was murdered by Madanapāla.<sup>1</sup> But though dark hints to some such foul crime may be detected in *RC.*, there is no positive evidence in support of any of these contentions. All that we definitely know is that Madanapāla succeeded his nephew Gopāla III, and ruled for more than 14 years (Ins. No. 47).

The period covered by the three reigns of Kumārapāla, Gopāla III, and Madanapāla (c. 1120-1155 A.D.) saw the final collapse of the Pāla kingdom. The circumstances leading to this catastrophe are not yet fully known to us, but some of the causes operating to the same end, namely the disruption within and invasions from outside, may be described in some detail.

Troubles began early in the reign of Kumārapāla. The Kamauli Plate (No. 50) tells us that Vaidyadeva, the great and favourite minister of Kumārapāla, obtained victory in a naval fight in South Bengal, and, being ordered by his master, put down the rebellion of Tiingyadeva in the east. Tiingyadeva was presumably the feudal ruler of Kāmarūpa which was conquered by Rāmapāla. For Vaidyadeva, who put down the rebellion, became ruler of the country which included Prāgjyotisha-*bhukti* and Kāmarūpa-*maṇḍala*. The victory of Vaidyadeva, however, did not restore Kāmarūpa to the Pālas, for within a short time, possibly after the death of Kumārapāla, Vaidyadeva practically assumed independence.<sup>2</sup>

About the same time Eastern Bengal also must have passed out of the hands of the Pālas, for we find an independent Varman dynasty ruling in Vikramapura. According to *RC.*, a Varman ruler acknowledged the suzerainty of Rāmapāla, and sought his protection, but the Belāva copper-plate leaves no doubt that Bhojavarman was ruling as an independent chieftain.<sup>3</sup> Vaidyadeva's military campaign in South Bengal perhaps indicates renewed conflict either with Anantavarman Chodagaṅga, or the Later Chālukyas, leading to the rise of the Senas. As already noted above,<sup>4</sup> the Eastern Gaṅga king is said to have carried his victorious arms right up to the bank of the Ganges, as far as Midnapur, some time before 1135 A.D. He also defeated the king of Mandāra on the Ganges, and destroyed his fortified town Āramya, probably Arambagh in Hooghly district.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Pāla records claim

is very doubtful (cf. *JRASBL.* vii. 216). Dr. N. K. Bhattasali's reconstruction of the history of Gopāla III (*IHQ.* xvii. 214-216) is too imaginary to be seriously considered.

<sup>1</sup> *BI.* 311.

<sup>2</sup> Ins. No. 50, vv. 11, 13-14, and ll. 47 ff.

<sup>3</sup> This has been fully discussed in ch. vii. *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 162, f.n. 6.

<sup>5</sup> For Mandāra, cf. *supra* p. 21; also p. 157, f.n. 2 above. For the conquests of Anantavarman in Bengal, cf. the Kendupatna Grant, vv. 22, 30, *JASB.* lxxv. 239, 241.

victory in the campaigns in South Bengal during the reign of Kumārapāla, and a somewhat obscure verse in *RC.* (iv. 47) seems to imply that Madanapāla had some success in Kalinga, or at least had power to defeat the king of Kalinga if the latter dared attack him. But shortly a power arose in the borderland between the kingdoms of the Pālas and Anantavarman, which checkmated both and carried its victorious arms in the heart of their dominions. These were the Senas who undoubtedly took advantage of the conflict between the Pālas and the Eastern Gaṅgas to establish their position in South Bengal. Their task was also facilitated by the invasions of the Later Chālukyas to which detailed reference will be made in a later chapter. It is not also altogether unlikely that the naval campaigns in South Bengal during the reign of Kumārapāla were directed against the Senas.

Like the Eastern Gaṅgas and the Chālukyas in the south, the third hostile power, kept in check by Rāmapāla, viz., the Gāhaḍavālas in the west, also took advantage of his death and the consequent weakness of the Pālas to push forward their conquests. The Māner Plates<sup>1</sup> show that by 1124 A.D. they had advanced up to the district of Patna. It is also evident from the Lar Plates<sup>2</sup> that the Gāhaḍavāla king Govindachandra was in occupation of Monghyr in A.D. 1146. Madanapāla must have achieved some success in his fight with the Gāhaḍavālas towards the end of his reign. For the Jaynagar inscription (No. 47) shows that some time before his 14th regnal year, i.e., about 1154 A.D., he had recovered Monghyr. In his war with the Gāhaḍavālas, he received valuable assistance from his kinsman Chandradeva, the lord of Aṅga, who was the son of Suvarṇadeva and grandson of Mahāṇa.<sup>3</sup> The *RC.* frequently refers to the alliance between the two, and is full of praises for Chandradeva.<sup>4</sup> It is not unlikely that Chandradeva, like his grandfather Mahāṇa, brought about an alliance between the Pāla and the Gāhaḍavāla king both of whom were his near relatives. For *RC.* says (iv. 23) that in a moment of peril, when his kingdom was in disorder, Madanapāla made alliance with a king of godly character. But, for the present, this is a pure conjecture.

<sup>1</sup> *JASB.* xviii. 81. The conflict between the Pālas and the Gāhaḍavālas seems to be also referred to in *Prākṛita Paṇḍalam* (*IHQ.* xi. 565-66).

<sup>2</sup> *EL.* vii. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *IHQ.* v. 35 ff. The view, originally propounded by Mr. H. P. Śāstri (*RC.* 16) and followed by Mr. R. D. Banerji (*BI.* 312-13), that this Chandra was the Gāhaḍavāla king Chandradeva is untenable. This point has been discussed in App. II in connection with the date of Rāmapāla.

<sup>4</sup> *RC.* iv. 16-21.

Even apart from the above express reference, there are other indications in *RC.* about great troubles within the kingdom of Madanapāla. Madanapāla is said to have destroyed or dethroned a king named Govardhana (iv. 47). A king of this name is referred to in Belāva copper-plate<sup>1</sup> as having been defeated by Jātavarman, the king of East Bengal. But as Jātavarman was a contemporary of Divya and Vighrahapāla III, it is difficult to identify the two Govardhanas, though this cannot be regarded as altogether impossible. In any case, he may be regarded as a local ruler in Bengal.

But more significant is the reference to a battle on the river Kālindī, which is probably to be identified with the modern river of that name in Malda district which once flowed past or near the capital of Madanapāla. We are told (iv. 27) that Madanapāla had driven back to the Kālindī the vanguard of the forces that had destroyed a large number of soldiers on his side. This probably refers to the conquest of Vijayasena who had already made himself master of Southern and Eastern Bengal. In his Deopārā inscription, he claims to have driven away the lord of Gauḍa, who was almost certainly Madanapāla. The victory was not perhaps a decisive one, but the authority of Madanapāla in North Bengal was considerably weakened, if not finally destroyed, by this invasion.

It is also not unlikely that the disorder in the kingdom, or the battle on the Kālindī, refers to an invasion of Gauḍa by the Kārṇāṭa ruler of Mithilā. We have seen above that Nānyadeva claimed to have broken the powers of Gauḍa and Vāṅga. A king, described as *Gauḍadhvaḥja* Gāṅgeyadeva and mentioned in a colophon as reigning in Tihut in *Saṃvat* 1076, probably refers to his son Gāṅgadeva ruling in 1154 A.D.<sup>2</sup> The title *Gauḍadhvaḥja* seems to indicate that he claimed some political authority in Gauḍa. The son of Nānyadeva was almost certainly a contemporary of Madanapāla, and probably attacked his kingdom with some success.

The internal disruption and foreign invasions, described above, led to the collapse of the Pāla kingdom. The Manahali copper-plate (No. 46) shows that at least up to the eighth year of Madanapāla, a considerable portion of North Bengal, if not the whole of it, was included within his kingdom. The nature and extent of his authority over North Bengal after that date cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. The Jaynagar Image inscription (No. 47) shows that in the 14th year of his reign he

<sup>1</sup> *IB.* 14; also *infra* p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> *IHQ.* VII. 681.

ruled over the Monghyr district. In view of what we know of the Senas, the Gāhaḍavālas, and the Karṇāṭa rulers of Mithilā, we may safely conclude that when Madanapāla died, the Pālas had ceased to exercise any sovereignty in Western, Southern, and Eastern Bengal, and in Western and Northern Bihar. In other words, the Pāla kingdom was confined to Central and Eastern Bihar, and probably included a portion of Northern Bengal. Within ten years of the death of Madanapāla, the descendants of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, if any, were driven away even from this last refuge by the Senas, and the Pālas passed out of history.

Madanapāla is the last king who is definitely known to have belonged to the great Pāla dynasty. Names of some kings ending in -pāla are known from records found in Bihar, but their relationship, if any, with the Pāla dynasty of Bengal has not yet been established. One of these is named Govindapāla, who ruled in the Gayā district. The colophons of a few manuscripts and a stone inscription are dated in years which seem to be counted from the destruction of his kingdom in 1162 A.D.<sup>1</sup> If this view be correct, Govindapāla must have ascended the throne shortly, if not imme-

<sup>1</sup> Govindapāla is known from two stone inscriptions, one of which was found in Gayā, and colophons of seven manuscripts (PB. 108-112). One of these alone is dated in the ordinary way—'Paramēśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka-Paramasaugata-Mahārājādhirāja-śrīmad-Govindapālasya vijaya-rājya-samvatsare 4.' Three others, including the stone inscription, use, however, peculiar expressions such as "Śrī-Govindapāla-deva-gatarājye chaturdaśa-samvatsare," "Śrīmad-Govindapāla-devasy-ātita-samvatsa 18," and "Śrīmad-Govindapāla-devānām vinashṭarājye āṣṭa-triṃśat-samvatsare." The dates in three other colophons are given simply as "Śrī-Govindapāliya samvat 24," "Govindapāla-devānām sam 37" and "Śrīmad-Govindapāla-devānām sam 39." The remaining colophon, dated in sam 38, gives the title Gaudēśvara to Govindapāla. The second stone inscription of unknown origin has never been published, and all that we are told is that it was dated in 1178 A.D. (ASC. xv. 155). The correct interpretation of the above expressions denoting dates has given rise to difficulties (for a full discussion and references, cf. JASB. N.3. xvii. 8 ff.). Mr. R. D. Banerji held the view that the king ruled for 39 years, though he ceased to exercise any sovereignty in those places where the expression 'gata-rājye,' 'vinashṭa-rājye,' 'ātita-samvatsa' etc., are used. A far more reasonable view seems to be to interpret them, like similar expressions used in connection with Lakshmapasena, as the years counted from the cessation of the reign of Govindapāla. Now the Gayā Stone inscription is dated in 1232 Vikāri i.e., v.s., and 'gata-rājye chaturdaśa-samvatsare.' According to Mr. Banerji's interpretation, this would place the accession of Govindapāla in 1219 v.s. or 1162 A.D., whereas according to the other view, that year would coincide with the end of his reign. In the former case, Govindapāla must have been on the throne till at least 1200 A.D. (30th year). But this is incompatible with the scheme of chronology of the Sena kings, which, though rejected by Mr. Banerji, is now almost universally adopted. This point has been further discussed in Chap. VIII. App. 1. in connection with the chronology of the Sena kings.

diately, after Madanapāla. No connection between the two has yet been established, but the name-ending *-pāla*, the assumption of full imperial titles including 'Lord of Gauḍa,' and the reckoning of date from the end of his reign raise a strong presumption that he was the last member of the Imperial Pāla dynasty. Whether his kingdom extended much further beyond the district of Gayā, where his stone inscription has been found, cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. The assumption of imperial titles and the epithet 'Lord of Gauḍa' may be a vain boast, though the possibility is not altogether excluded that he might have temporarily occupied Gauḍa. For, as we shall see later, the Sena kings had probably to send more than one expedition before they finally seized the Gauḍa kingdom.

Some scholars have assumed the existence of another Pāla king named Palapāla. But the assumption is based upon very doubtful reading of an inscription, and Palapāla cannot find any place in sober history until further evidence is forthcoming.<sup>1</sup> The same may be said of Indradyumnapāla who is only known from tradition.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. D. Banerji introduced this Pāla king on the strength of an inscription found at Jaynagar (*JBORS.* xiv. 496). The reading *Gaudeśvara Palapāla* is, however, impossible, even according to his own *facsimile*, unless we imagine that one letter (*ra*) was dropped by the engraver through mistake, and another letter (*la*) was written in line 1 in two different ways, although separated by only one letter (*JBORS.* xv. 649; *IHQ.* vi. 164). Thus the existence of Palapāla may be seriously doubted.

<sup>2</sup> *IA.* xxxviii. 248.

## APPENDIX I

### LIST OF PĀLA INSCRIPTIONS

#### DHARMAPĀLA

1. Year 26—Bodh-Gayā Ins. *JASB.* N.S. iv. 101; *GL.* 29.
2. Year 32—Khalimpur cp. *EI.* iv. 243; *GL.* 9.
3. . . —Nālandā cp. *EI.* xxiii. 290.

#### DEVAPĀLA

4. Year 9—Kurkihār Image Ins. *JBORS.* xxvi. 251.
5. Year 25—Hilsā Image Ins. *JBORS.* x. 33; *IA.* 1928, p. 153; *JRASBL.* iv. 390.
6. Year 33—Monghyr cp. *EI.* xviii. 304; *GL.* 33.
7. Year 39 or 35—Nālandā cp. *EI.* xvii. 318; Monograph No. 1 of V.R.S.; *JRASBL.* vii. 215.
8. . . —Ghoshrāwā Stone Ins. *IA.* xvii. 307; *GL.* 45.
9. Year 3—Metal Image Ins. *ASI.* 1927-28, p. 139.

#### VIGRAHAPĀLA I OR ŚŪRAPĀLA I

10. Year 3—Two identical Bihar Buddha Image Ins. *JASB.* N.S. iv. 108; *PB.* 57. For correction of date cf., *JRASBL.* iv. 390.
11. Sārnāth inscription mentioning Jayapāla, who is perhaps the father of Vigrahapāla I. *ASI.* 1907-8, p. 75.

#### NĀRĀYAṆAPĀLA

12. Year 7—Gayā Temple Ins. *PB.* 60.
13. Year 9—Indian Museum Stone Ins. *PB.* 61-62.
14. Year 17—Bhāgalpur cp. *IA.* xv. 304; *GL.* 55.
15. Year 54—Bihar Image Ins. *IA.* xlvii. 110; *SPP.* 1328 (B.S.), p. 169.
16. Bādāl Pillar Ins. *EI.* ii. 160; *GL.* 70.

#### RĀJYAPĀLA

17. Year 24—Nālandā Pillar Ins. *IA.* xlvii. 111.
18. Year 28—Kurkihār Image Ins. *JBORS.* xxvi. 246.
19. Year 31—Kurkihār Image Ins. *ibid.* p. 250.
20. Year 32 (31?)—Kurkihār Image Ins. *Ibid.* p. 247.
21. Year 32—Kurkihār Image Ins. *Ibid.* p. 248.

#### GOPĀLA II

22. Year 1—Nālandā Image Ins. *JASB.* N.S. iv. 105; *GL.* 86.

23. Year 6—Jājilpārā cp. *Bhāratavarsha* 1844 (B.S.), Part I, p. 264.  
 24. —Bodh-Gayā Buddha Image Ins. *JASB.* N.S. iv. 105; *GL.* 88.

## VIGRAHAPĀLA II (OR III)

25. Year 3(2?)—Kurkihār Image Ins. *JBORS.* xxvi. 37, 240.  
 26. Year 8—Terracotta Ins. *Ibid.* 37.  
 27. Year 19—Kurkihār Image Ins. *Ibid.* 36, 239.  
 28. Year 19—Kurkihār Image Ins. *Ibid.* 37, 240.

## MAHĪPĀLA I

29. (v.s.) 1083—Sārṇāth Ins. *IA.* xiv. 139; *ASI.* 1903-4, p. 222; *JASB.* 1906, p. 445; *GL.* 104.  
 30. Year 3—Bāghāura Image Ins. *EI.* xvii. 355.  
 31. Year 9—Bāngarh cp. *JASB.* lxi. 77; *EI.* xiv. 324; *GL.* 91.  
 32. Year 11—Nālandā Stone Ins. *JASB.* N.S. iv. 106; *GL.* 101.  
 33. Year 11—Bodh-Gayā Image Ins. *PB.* 75.  
 34. Year 31 (probably 21)—Kurkihār Image Ins. *JBORS.* xxvi. 245.  
 35. Year 48—Two identical Imādpur Image Ins. *IA.* xiv. 165 (f.n. 17); *JRASBL.* vii. 218.  
 35A. On a colossal statue of the ascetic Buddha at Titarawa or Tetrawan is an Ins. of three lines. Only the name Mahīpāla has been read. *ASC.* i. 39; iii. 123, No. 11.

## NAYAPĀLA

36. Year 15—Gayā Narasimha Temple Ins. *PB.* 78.  
 37. Year 15—Gayā Krishṇadvārikā Temple Ins. *JASB.* lxi. 190; *GL.* 110.

## VIGRAHAPĀLA III

38. Year 5—Gayā Akshayaṇa Temple Ins. *PB.* 81.  
 39. Year 12—Āmgāchhi cp. *EI.* xv. 293; *GL.* 121. The date was formerly read as 13. Cf. *PB.* 80.  
 40. Year 13—Bihar Buddha Image Ins. *PB.* 112.

## RĀMAPĀLA.

41. Year 3—Tetrawan Image Ins. *JASB.* N.S. iv. 109; *PB.* 93; for correction of date cf. *JRASBL.* iv. 390.  
 42. Year 42—Chandimau Image Ins. *PB.* 93-94.

## GOPĀLA III

43. Nimdighi (Manda) Ins. *SPP.* xix. 155; *PB.* 102; *IHQ* xvii. 207.  
 44. Year 14(?)—Rājibpur Image Ins. *IHQ.* xvii. 217; *ASI.* 1936-37, pp. 130-33. For the date of this Ins. cf. *supra* p. 167, f.n. 4 and *JRASBL.* vii. 216.

## MADANAPĀLA

45. Year 3—Bihar Hill Image Ins. *ASC.* iii. 124. No. 16.  
 46. Year 8—Manahali cp. *JASB.* lxix. Pt. I, p. 68; *GL.* 147.  
 47. Year 14—Jaynagar Image Ins. *ASC.* iii. 125. The date is usually read as 19, but cf. *JRASBL.* vii. 216.

## MISCELLANEOUS INSCRIPTIONS

48. Dinajpur (Bāngarh) Pillar Ins. of Kuñjaraghaṭāvarsha. *JASB.* N.S. vii. 619; *PB.* 68; *Vaṅgavāṇī* (Bengali), 1330 (B.S.), p. 249.  
 49. Irdā cp. of Kāmboja king Nayapāla, Year 13. *EI.* xxii. 150; xxiv. 43.  
 50. Kamauli cp. of Vaidyadeva (mentions Kumārapāla), Year 4. *EI.* ii. 350; *GL.* 127.  
 51. Gayā Gadādhara Image Ins. of Paritoshā. *PB.* 82-83.  
 52. Gayā Śitalā Temple Ins. of Yakshapāla. *IA.* xvi. 64ff; *PB.* 96.

## INSCRIPTIONS OF THE PRATIHĀRA KING MAHENDRAPĀLA (ALSO WRITTEN AS MAHĪNDRAPĀLA) FOUND IN BENGAL AND BIHAR

53. Year 2—British Museum Ins. *PB.* 64.  
 54. Year 4—Bihar Buddha Image Ins. *ASI.* 1923-24, p. 102.  
 55. Year 5—Pāhārpur Pillar Ins. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur* (*Memoir ASI.* No 55), p. 75.  
 56. Year 8—Rāmgayā Daśāvatāra Ins. *PB.* 64.  
 57. Year 9—British Museum Ins. *PB.* 64, Pl. xxxi. [The date is read as 9 by R. D. Banerji, and 6 by Kielhorn (*Nach. Gotting.* 1904, pp. 210-11) and Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar (*List*, No. 1644) The reading '9' seems to be right.]  
 58. Year 9—Gunariya Ins. *PB.* 64; *JASB.* xvi. 278. Pl. v.  
 59. Year 19(?)—Bihar Ins. (now missing). *PB.* 64. (This may be the same as No. 57).



## APPENDIX II

### THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PĀLA KINGS

Nearly twenty years ago,<sup>1</sup> the writer of this chapter laid down a definite scheme of chronology of the Pāla and the Sena kings. His conclusions, though opposed to the prevailing view championed by Mr. R. D. Banerji, have now been generally accepted,<sup>2</sup> with slight modifications, due to new discoveries. It is not necessary, therefore, to discuss the different views once held on the subject, and it will suffice to re-state the fundamental principles on which that scheme was based, and the chronology resulting therefrom.

Proceeding from the one fixed point in the chronology of the Pālas, viz., the date A.D. 1026 for Mahīpāla I supplied by the Sārnāth inscription (No. 29), it is possible to fix the approximate dates of his predecessors and successors by counting backwards and forwards from this fixed date, on the basis of the known reign-periods of those kings<sup>3</sup> and a few well-established data, viz., the synchronism between Dharmapāla and Govinda III, Mahīpāla and Rājendra Chōla, and Nayapāla and Kalachuri Karna; the conquest of Varendra by Vijayasena after the eighth regnal year of Madanapāla; and the end of Madanapāla's reign before the known date of Govindapāla.

The following table is drawn up on this basis, showing the known reign-periods of kings and making allowance (a) for the excess of their actual reign-periods over those known at present, and (b) the reign-periods of those kings about the duration of whose reign nothing is known so far.

NAME OF KING.		KNOWN REIGN- PERIOD.	APPROXIMATE YEAR OF ACCESSION.
1	Gopāla I ..	.. ..	750 A.D.
2.	Dharmapāla ..	.. 32	770 "
3.	Devapāla ..	.. 30 (or 35)	810 "
4.	Vigrahapāla I or Śūrapāla I ..	.. 3	850 "
5.	Nārāyaṇapāla ..	.. 54	854 "
6	Rājyapāla ..	.. 32	908 "

<sup>1</sup> *JASB.* N.S. xvii. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The latest exposition of Mr. Banerji's views is in *JBORS.* xiv. 489-533. For criticism of these views and general discussion on Pāla chronology, cf. *JBORS.* xv. 643-650; *IIIQ.* iii. 578-591; vi. 153-168.

<sup>3</sup> For the reign-periods, cf. the regnal years of the inscriptions in Appendix I.

NAME OF KING		KNOWN REIGN- PERIOD.	APPROXIMATE YEAR OF ACCESSION.	
7. Gopāla II	..	.. 17	940	"
8. Vīgrahapāla II	..	.. 26 (?)	960	"
9. Mahipāla I	..	.. 48	988	"
10. Nayapāla	..	.. 15	1038	"
11. Vīgrahapāla III	..	.. ..	1055	"
12. Mahipāla II	..	.. ..	1070	"
13. Śūrapāla II	..	.. ..	1075	"
14. Rāmapāla	..	.. 42	1077	"
15. Kumārapāla	..	.. ..	1120	"
16. Gopāla III	..	.. 14 (?)	1125	"
17. Madanapāla	..	.. 14	1140	"
18. Govindapāla	..	.. 4	1155	"

Although the general basis of the chronology has been explained above, it is necessary to make a few remarks regarding the dates assigned to some of the kings.

#### 1. Gopāla I

Dr. M. Shahidullah placed the date of Gopāla's accession in 715 A.D., chiefly on the strength of Tāranātha's account.<sup>1</sup> But his whole chronological scheme is vitiated by the wrong assumption that Govichandra was the last king of the Chandra dynasty. He ignores altogether the reign of Lalitachandra who, according to Tāranātha, succeeded Govichandra and ruled for many years in peace.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Shahidullah puts the end of Govichandra's reign at about 700 A.D. If we add the long reign of Lalitachandra, and the years of anarchy that followed, the commencement of Gopāla's reign may be reasonably fixed at about the middle of the eighth century. The date has been assumed, in round numbers, as about 750 A.D. but this should be regarded as only an approximate one.

Mr. D. C. Bhattacharya<sup>3</sup> places the accession of Gopāla in 700 A.D., mainly on the strength of Tibetan traditions, and accepts Tāranātha's statement that Gopāla ruled for 45 years. Presumably Gopāla was fairly advanced in age when he was called to the throne at a critical time. Hence we should not assign a long reign to him

<sup>1</sup> *IHQ.* VII. 530 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra* p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *IHQ.* III. 571-591; VI. 153-168. In drawing up the chronology of the Pālas, Mr. Bhattacharya has relied mostly on astronomical grounds. His conclusions in respect of the later kings (after Vīgrahapāla II) agree generally with those of mine. Regarding the earlier kings, the chief difference lies in the too early dates he assigns to Gopāla and Dharmapāla on the strength of various Tibetan traditions. According to Mr. Bhattacharya, the first three kings of the Pāla dynasty ruled for a period of 140 years. This is so unusual that nothing but the strongest positive evidence would warrant the assumption.

in the absence of any positive evidence. As regards Tibetan traditions, Tāranātha's account agrees with the proposed date.<sup>1</sup> Besides it has already been noted above (*supra* p. 124) that in an almost contemporary Tibetan text, Dharmapāla is mentioned as a contemporary of Mu-tig Btsan-po who ascended the throne in 797 A.D. This certainly supports the chronology adopted above, and does not favour the view that Gopāla was elected king long before 750 A.D.

## 2. Dharmapāla

The contemporaneity of Dharmapāla and Govinda III shows that Dharmapāla must have been on the throne some time during 793-814 A.D., which covers the reign-period of the latter. The statement in the Rāshtrakūṭa records that Govinda III defeated the Gurjara king Nāgabhaṭa, and that Dharmapāla submitted to the Rāshtrakūṭa king, perhaps enables us to narrow down the limits of the date. It was formerly supposed that the two events followed one another within a short time, and since the defeat of Nāgabhaṭa is mentioned in the Radhanpur Plates dated 27th July, 808 A.D. (according to Kielhorn, but August 809 A.D. according to Altekar),<sup>2</sup> but omitted in the Wani Grant issued in 807 A.D., they must have taken place sometime between these two dates.<sup>3</sup> But this theory must be given up in view of the fact that the defeat of Nāgabhaṭa is mentioned in the Manne Plates,<sup>4</sup> dated Ś. 724 (=802 A.D.). Nesari Plates dated Ś. 727 (805 A.D.),<sup>5</sup> and Sisavai Grant dated Ś. 729 (807 A.D.).<sup>6</sup> The Manne Plates were formerly regarded as spurious, but the newly discovered Sisavai Grant makes it probable that they were genuine. In any case we must hold that the defeat of Nāgabhaṭa by Govinda III took place certainly before 805 A.D., and probably before 802 A.D.<sup>7</sup> Unless, therefore, we assume that Govinda III's campaign against Dharmapāla took place long after he had defeated Nāgabhaṭa,<sup>8</sup> which is very unlikely, we must presume that Dharmapāla was on the throne at the beginning of the ninth century A.D.; and as he had already extended his power up to Kanauj by that time, his accession must be placed considerably before it.

<sup>1</sup> See *infra* p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> AR. 65, f.n. 40.

<sup>3</sup> GP. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. Carn. ix. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Khare, *Sources of the Medieval History of the Deccan*, Vol. I. p. 13. The actual date is December 805 (EI. xxiii. 216, f.n. 6).

<sup>6</sup> EI. xxiii. 214-217.

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion cf. EI. xxiii. 293-297.

<sup>8</sup> This is the view held by Altekar (*D. R. Bhandarkar Volume*, pp. 153-58; EI. xxiii. 293-94), who thinks that Govinda III fought twice with the northern powers. The first occasion was early in his reign when he merely repulsed a

## 3. Gopāla II

On the strength of a passage in the Pāla inscriptions,<sup>1</sup> it was held that Gopāla II reigned for a very long period, at least a longer period than his predecessor. But as the same passage occurs in an inscription dated in the 6th year of Gopāla II,<sup>2</sup> it can only be regarded as conventional.

The date in a palm-leaf MS. of the *Maitreya Vyākaraṇa* was read by MM. H. P. Śāstrī as year (57) of Gopāladeva's reign.<sup>3</sup> But Mr. R. D. Banerji and Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar read the date respectively as 17 and 11.<sup>4</sup> In view of these facts the long reign formerly assigned to Gopāla II can no longer be upheld.

## 4. Vīgrahapāla II and III

A manuscript of *Pañcharakṣhā* was copied in the twenty-sixth year of Vīgrahapāla,<sup>5</sup> who must be identified either with Vīgrahapāla II or Vīgrahapāla III; for as these two kings ruled within a

Gurjara invasion, presumably under Nāgabhaṭa. Later, some time after 808 or 809 A.D., he planned a grand offensive expedition in Northern India, presumably against Dharmapāla. The main argument of Altekar is based on the omission of all references to the victory against Dharmapāla in the stereotyped *prāśasti* of Govinda III, which mentions the defeat of even a petty mountain chief like Māraśarva. Altekar holds that as Govinda III died soon after, "he had not the necessary leisure to engage the services of a new poet to describe his sensational victories both in the north and the south. It was left for his son Amoghavarsha to rescue from oblivion his father's memorable achievements." It is to be noted, however, that even according to Altekar's chronology, Govinda III survived his victories over Dharmapāla for at least four years, an ample time for composing a new *prāśasti*, or rather adding to the old one. Further, the specific reference to the names of king Nāgabhaṭa and Dharmapāla does not occur in the earlier records of Amoghavarsha, though they refer to victories of Govinda III over the Gurjaras and Gauda, but we find it for the first time in a record dated 871 A.D., i.e., more than sixty years after the events took place. Professor Mirashi has justly pointed out, that according to the Sanjān Plates, Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha submitted to Govinda III before the latter's encampment at the capital of Mahārāja Śarva who is identified by all scholars, including Dr. Altekar, with Māraśarva, mentioned in the stereotyped draft. The Dharmapāla incident, therefore, must have taken place when that draft was made (*El.* xxiii. 297). A consideration of all the facts points to the conclusion that comparatively unimportant success of Govinda III against Dharmapāla was magnified beyond all proportion in later times, and glowing imaginary descriptions were added by later poets.

<sup>1</sup> *chirataram-avaner.....bhartā abhūt.* (v. 8. of the Ins. No. 81).

<sup>2</sup> Ins. No. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Sastri-Cat.* i. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *JBORS.* xiv. 490-91. Mr. D. C. Bhattacharya opposes the views of Mr. Banerji and Dr. Bhandarkar and agrees with MM. Śāstrī that the date is 57 (*IHQ.* vi. 152). Mr. Banerji reproduces a micro-photograph of the portion of the MS. containing the date (*op. cit.*). The first figure seems undoubtedly to be 1, but the second is very doubtful.

<sup>5</sup> *PB.* 67.

century, it would be unsafe to rely on palaeography and assign the ms. definitely to one of them.<sup>1</sup> For the same reason, king Vighrahpāla mentioned in the Kurkihār Image Ins.<sup>2</sup> of year 19 should be taken as either Vighrahpāla II or Vighrahpāla III. One of these kings must have, therefore, reigned for at least 26 years. Following previous writers, I have assumed this king to be Vighrahpāla II.

#### 5. Mahīpāla I

The date assigned to Mahīpāla I is based on the assumption that the Sārnāth Ins., dated 1026 A.D., belongs to his reign. This point has been discussed above (*supra* p. 140). The initial year, 988 A.D., satisfies the astronomical data contained in a ms. written in the 6th year of Mahīpāla's reign.<sup>3</sup>

#### 6. Nayapāla

The date of Nayapāla is controlled by the fact that he was a contemporary of the Kalachuri king Karṇa who ascended the throne in 1041 A.D.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to assay the exact value of the Tibetan tradition<sup>5</sup> in fixing the year of Nayapāla's accession, but the date suggested is in full agreement with this.

#### 7. Rāmapāla

Mr. D. C. Bhattacharya made an attempt to fix the date of Rāmapāla's death on the strength of a passage in *Seka-śubhodayā*. Apart from the fact that this book cannot claim any historical character, and is merely a collection of fables and legends,<sup>6</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> JASB. N.S. xvi. 301 ff. Mr. D. C. Bhattacharya adversely criticised the general principles formulated in this paper (*IHQ.* III. 579), but later himself formulated the same principles (*IHQ.* VI. 155).

<sup>2</sup> Ins. Nos. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> This statement is based on the calculation of Mr. D. C. Bhattacharya, *IHQ.* III. 584. Mr. J. C. Ghosh, on the other hand, places the accession of Mahīpāla in 981 A.D. and supports it on astronomical grounds (*IC.* I. 291). This only proves how little we may rely on astronomical data in fixing a definite date. Mr. Ghosh's theory is based on some details furnished by Tāranātha which are hardly credible.

<sup>4</sup> This is the general view based on Kielhorn's calculation, but Mr. J. C. Ghosh places the accession of Karṇa in 1039 A.D. (*IC.* I. 289).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the remarks made above in connection with the history of Nayapāla. According to the Tibetan tradition, Nayapāla's coronation took place shortly before Atiśa left for Tibet (*IHQ.* VI. 159), an event for which various dates have been proposed between 1038 and 1042 A.D. (*v. supra* p. 145). D. C. Bhattacharya has calculated the date of Atiśa's departure as March, 1041 A.D., but this may be doubted. The proposed date of Nayapāla's accession is, therefore, in full agreement with the Tibetan tradition.

<sup>6</sup> The book *Seka-śubhodayā* ('Blessed advent of the Śaṅkha') is ascribed to Halāyudha Miśra, the famous minister of Lakshmapasena, but this is absurd on the

expression recording the date (*Śāke yugma-venu-randhra-gate*) does not offer any intelligible meaning. By different emendations of the passage, Mr. Bhattacharya and Dr. N. K. Bhattasali fix the year of Rāmapāla's death as 1042 Śaka (=1120 A.D.).<sup>1</sup> The same date has been suggested for the end of Rāmapāla's reign according to the general scheme of chronology adopted by me, and not on the basis of the above interpretation.

MM. H. P. Śāstrī<sup>2</sup> and Mr. R. D. Banerji<sup>3</sup> identified Chandra, mentioned as a friend of Madanapāla in *Rāmacharita* (iv. 16-21), with king Chandradeva who founded the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty of Kanauj. They therefore held that as this Chandradeva died before 1104 A.D., Madanapāla must have ascended the throne before that. Dr. R. G. Basak has, however, pointed out two very important facts mentioned in *Rāmacharita* about Chandra, viz., (1) that he was a *mahāmāṇḍalika* and the ruler of Aṅga, and (2) that his father was Suvarṇa. As Dr. Basak has suggested, Suvarṇa is almost certainly to be identified with the son, named Suvarṇa, of Mahāṇa, the ruler of Aṅga, and the maternal uncle of Rāmapāla.<sup>4</sup> Thus Chandra was the nephew of Rāmapāla, and cousin of Madanapāla. He probably succeeded his grandfather Mahāṇa as ruler of Aṅga, and we know that Mahāṇa died shortly before Rāmapāla. There is thus no valid reason for the belief that Madanapāla was a contemporary of the Gāhaḍavāla king Chandradeva.

### 8. *Gopāla* III

The chronology of the successors of Rāmapāla has been based on the assumption that *Gopāla* III had a reign of 14 years. The difficulty of assuming the Ins. No. 44 to be dated in the year 14 of *Gopāla* III has been discussed above (*supra* p. 167, f.n. 4), but this view has been provisionally accepted.

face of it. Dr. S. K. Chatterji rightly declares it to be a forgery, but regards it as not later than the 16th century (Foreword to the edition of Mr. Sukumar Sen published in *Hrishikeśa* Series, p. v.). Mr. R. D. Banerji points out that as the book mentions a Musalman king named Hasan Śāha, evidently a mistake for Sultān Alāuddin Husain Shāh, the only king of that name who ruled over Bengal, it cannot be earlier than the 16th century (*JBORS.* xiv. 522). The book cannot by any means be regarded as a reliable source of historical information, though it refers to some historical figures and events. Mr. Banerji, however, goes too far when he asserts that the work does not contain a single passage which may be taken to be historically accurate. (*op. cit.* pp. 522-23). The statement, for example, that Rāmapāla drowned himself in the Ganges (pp. 60-61) is corroborated by *Rāmacharita* (iv. 9), and *Halāyudha*, *Dhoyā*, *Goverdhana*, and *Umāpatidhara* are correctly stated to be contemporaries of Lakshmaṇasena.

<sup>1</sup> *IHQ.* III. 283; vi. 160-61; xvii. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *RC.* 16.

<sup>3</sup> *PB.* 103.

<sup>4</sup> *IHQ.* v. 35-48.

### APPENDIX III

#### LAMA TARANATHA'S ACCOUNT OF BENGAL<sup>1</sup>

The Tibetan historian Lāmā Tāranātha was born in 1573 A.D., and completed his famous work '*History of Buddhism in India*' in the year 1608 A.D. His main object was to give a detailed account of the Buddhist teachers, doctrines, and institutions in India during the different periods. He has, however, always taken care to add the names of the kings under whose patronage, or during whose regime, they flourished. In this way he has preserved a considerable amount of Buddhist traditions regarding the political history of India. That these traditions cannot be regarded as reliable data for the political history of India admits of no doubt. At the same time there is equally little doubt that they contain a nucleus of historical truths, which neither Indian literature nor Indian tradition has preserved for us. This fact, which will be illustrated in the following pages, makes it desirable to give a short summary of the political history of Bengal which may be gleaned from the pages of Tāranātha.

The only kingdom in the east, of which Tāranātha gives the names of successive generations of kings, is Bhaṅgala, which may be taken to denote, in a general way, Southern and Eastern Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

According to Tāranātha, the Chandra dynasty ruled in Bhaṅgala before the Pālas, and the names of all the kings mentioned by him prior to Gopāla end in *-chandra*.

One of these kings was Vṛikshachandra, whose descendants, king Vigamachandra and his son king Kāmachandra, ruled in the east during the time of Śrī-Harsha (*i.e.* the emperor Harshavardhana)

<sup>1</sup> This Appendix is abridged from an article by the author published in *IHQ.* xvi. 219ff. The account is based on the German translation of Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism* by A. Schiefner (*Tāranātha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien. aus dem Tibetischen übersetzt von Anton Schiefner, St. Petersburg, 1869*). Figures within brackets refer to the pages of this book. Portions of this book were translated into English in *Indian Antiquary* (iv. 361ff), but the translation is not always accurate as the following pages will show.

<sup>2</sup> Attention may be drawn to the following passages: (1) In Odivisa, Bhaṅgala, and Rāḡhā (p. 72); (2) In the land Puṇḍravardhana, lying between Magadha and Bhaṅgala (p. 99); (3) In Bhaṅgala and in Varendra (p. 211); (4) Vimalachandra ruled over the three provinces, Bhaṅgala, Kāmarūpa, and Tīraḥuti (p. 172).

In one passage Gauḍa is referred to as a part of Bhaṅgala (p. 82), but it is not clear whether it means that Gauḍa was included within the kingdom of Bhaṅgala, or formed geographically a part of it. The former seems to be the intended meaning.

(p. 126). Next we hear of king Simhachandra, of the Chandra family (presumably the one founded by Vṛkshachandra), who flourished during the reign of Śīla, son of the emperor Śrī-Harsha (p. 146). Bālachandra, son of Simhachandra, being driven from Bhaṅgala (presumably by the powerful king Pañchama Śimha of the Lichchhavi family whose kingdom extended from Tibet to Trilīṅga and Benares to the sea) ruled in Tirahuti (i.e. Trihut in North Bihar) (pp. 146, 158). Bālachandra's son Vimalachandra, however, retrieved the fortunes of his family, and ruled over the three kingdoms Bhaṅgala, Kāmarūpa, and Tirahuti. He married the sister of king Bhārthari (Bhartṛihari?) of the Mālava royal family, and was succeeded by his son Govichandra about the time when Dharmakīrti, the famous Buddhist teacher, died (p. 195). Govichandra was succeeded by Lalitachandra, his relation on the father's side, who ruled for many years in peace (p. 197).<sup>1</sup> After referring to the reigns of Govichandra and his successor Lalitachandra, both of whom attained *Siddhi* (spiritual salvation), Tāranātha remarks :

"Thus Lalitachandra was the last king of the Chandra family. In the five eastern provinces, Bhaṅgala, Oḍiśā (Orissa) and the rest, every Kshatriya, Grandee Brāhmana, and merchant was a king in his own house (in the neighbourhood), but there was no king ruling over the country" (p. 197).<sup>2</sup>

Then follows a long account of the Buddhist teachers of the period. Continuing the historical narrative in the next chapter, Tāranātha first tells us how a Tree-god begot a son on a young Kshatriya woman<sup>3</sup> near Puṇḍravardhana; how this son became a devotee of the goddess Chundā; how, directed by the goddess in a dream, he went to the Vihāra of Ārya Khasarpana, and, having

Tāranātha's geographical notion is clearly indicated in the following passage :

"Eastern India consists of three parts: Bhaṅgala and Oḍiśā belong to Aparāntaka and are called its eastern part. The north-eastern provinces Kāmarūpa, Tripura and Hasama are called Girivarta, adorned with mountains. Proceeding towards the east near the Northern Hills are the provinces Nagaṭa Pukham on the sea coast, Balgu etc., Rakhang, Hamsavati and the remaining parts of the kingdom of Munjang; further off are Champā, Kāmboja and the rest. All these are called by the general name Koki" (p. 262).

For further discussion of Tāranātha's account of Bhaṅgala and the light it throws on the location of the original kingdom of the Pālas cf. *IHQ.* xvi. 219ff.

<sup>1</sup> Rai Bahadur S. C. Das gives a different version of this account (*JASB.* 1898, p. 22).

<sup>2</sup> The translation of this passage as given in *IA.* iv. 365-66 viz., 'In Oḍiśā, in Bengal, and the other five provinces of the east.....etc.' is wrong. This has been followed in *Gauḍarājamāla* (p. 21), and *Bāṅgālār Itihāsa* (p. 162) by R. D. Banerji. The original German passage is: "In den fünf östlichen Ländergebieten Bhaṅgala, Oḍiśā und den übrigen...."

<sup>3</sup> "A shepherdess" according to Buxton (p. 166).



prayed there for a kingdom, was asked to proceed towards the east (p. 202). Then occurs the following queer story :

"At that time the kingdom of Bhaṅgala had been without a king for many years, and people were suffering great miseries. The leaders gathered and elected a king in order that the kingdom might be lawfully ruled. The elected king was, however, killed that very night by a strong and ugly Nāga woman who assumed the form of a queen of an earlier king (according to some, Govichandra, according to others, Lalitachandra). In this way she killed every elected king. But as the people could not leave the kingdom without a king, they elected one every morning, only to see that he was killed by her during night and his dead body thrown out at day-break. Some years passed in this way, the citizens being elected in turn as king for the day. At this time a devotee of the goddess Chundā came to a house, where the family was overwhelmed with grief. On enquiry he learnt that next day the turn of the elected king fell on a son of that house. He, however, offered to take the place of the son, on receiving some money, and the joy of the family knew no bounds. He obtained the reward and was elected king in the morning. When in midnight the Nāga woman, in the form of a Rākshasī, approached towards him, he struck her with the wooden club (which he always carried), sacred to his tutelary deity, and she died. The people were greatly astonished to see him alive in the morning. He thereupon offered to take the place of others whose turn came next to be elected as kings, and he was elected king seven times in course of seven days. Then, on account of his pre-eminent qualifications, the people elected him as a permanent king and gave him the name Gopāla" (pp. 203-4).

This story is a fine illustration of historical myths. The anarchy and turmoil in Bengal, due to the absence of any central political authority, and the election of Gopāla to the throne by the voice of the people, undoubtedly form the historical background against which the popular nursery-tale of a demoness devouring a king every night has been cleverly set. Such a story cannot be used as historical evidence except where, as in the present case, the kernel of historical fact is proved by independent evidence. By a further analysis of the story it may be possible to glean a few more facts about Gopāla.

According to the story, Gopāla was born near Puṇḍravardhana, i.e. in Varendra, although he became king of Bhaṅgala, which undoubtedly stands for Vaṅgāla or Vaṅga. This offers a solution of what might otherwise have been a little riddle. For whereas in the *Rāmacharita*, Varendrī is referred to as *janakabhūḥ* (father-land) of the Pālas, the contemporary inscriptions call them *Vaṅgapati* or rulers of Vaṅga, and refer to Gauda and Vaṅga as separate kingdoms. Tāranātha also used the name of Varendra, as distinguished from Bhaṅgala.<sup>1</sup> It may thus be assumed that the birth-place of Gopāla was in Varendra, but the throne which was offered to him was that of Vaṅgāla or Vaṅga.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 182, f.n. 2, examples (2) and (3).